

TODD EDWARDS   KYLE HALL   ANTHONY "SHAKE" SHAKIR   MOSCA   NATALIE STORM

# XLR8R

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## ED'S RANT PRECIOUS MOMENTS



HEATING UP THE MIDWEST WINTER WITH ANTHONY "SHAKE" SHAKIR IN DETROIT.

While it seems that UK dance music is always being pushed forward (at least that's what its practitioners would have you believe), it would be nothing without its many influences, its constant looks back at music past. In a way, it's unimaginable that UK funky-future-garage-two-step-whatever-it's-called would be the beast it's become without the impact of house and techno scenes in New York, Chicago, or Detroit. Fortunately, guys like Hot City and Bok Bok would be the first to admit it.

So as that new canon of dance music is authored and officiated by young DJs and producers around the world, we've chosen to dedicate a large part of this issue to a few artists we consider to be part of the New Classics, most of them currently undergoing a "moment" of late-career recognition. This month, we start off at London's Fabric club, where *FACT Magazine* editor Tom Lea surveys the steady impact that New Jersey mainstay Todd Edwards has had on garage and house music. Edwards is the kind of guy that everyone wants a remix from these days, so perhaps nearly 20 years of toil have paid off for the producer/DJ. But don't just take our word for it... read up on what Kingdom and Hot City have to say about Todd's influence, too.

Of course, Edwards isn't the only Yank whose work is seeing a resurgence in Europe. The Motor City's renaissance in the house and techno departments is also in full swing. But just as first-wave Detroit techno producer Anthony "Shake" Shakir finally gets his long-overdue credit with a three-disc retrospective on The Netherlands' Rush Hour label, newcomers like Kyle Hall are showing up on Hyperdub and Warp, continuing to spread the groovy gospel of the not-yet-forgotten city to the far corners of the earth. It's a city whose name itself is still one of the most praise-filled adjectives one can bestow on a piece of electronic music (think Redshape or Motor City Drum Ensemble), so writer Walter Wasacz went in search of that warm sound that everybody's trying to capture. Detroit still seems to have it in droves: Andrés, Kenny Dixon Jr., Omar S, Mike Huckaby, Scott Grooves, Jason Fine—and those are just the guys that haven't left for Berlin.

On the flipside, Barcelona-based cover stars Delorean, we can tell you, are future classics in the making—not to mention DJ-purveyors of some of those old techno and house sounds themselves. As *XLR8R*'s Michael Harkin finds out, the band got into everything from grime and ghetto-tech to piano- and bassline house via their club night, Desparrame, before recording their gorgeous new LP, *Subiza*—which, truth be told, resembles something far more MBV and Madchester than DJ Assault and Wiley. It's quite the departure from the punk and emo sounds the band was making when they came together 10 years ago... so we've taken it upon ourselves to ensure that another 10 won't go by before their get their due credit.

—Ken Taylor, Editor

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Delorean, shot in Barcelona by Nacho Alegre

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Alex Sushon, Shawn Brackbill, Callan Clendedin, Dean Bein, Gamall Awad

## XLR8R

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DAVID DOWNS



David Downs writes about arts and technology from a hilltop base in San Francisco. Over the past decade, the award-winning investigative reporter's work has appeared in major newspapers and magazines like *Wired*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Onion*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Village Voice*. Downs co-founded pop counter-culture blog *The Dope Report* and is currently working on stories about synthetic life and death-aware computing. He wrote about Mosca for this issue.

[davidrdowns.com](http://davidrdowns.com)

JAMES JANO



James Jano is a man of few words, but no man's word is as good as his. This Detroit-born mover and shaker studied film and music at NYU before joining the *XLR8R* team last November. His talents include music composition, drumming, art, and secret handshakes. He currently researches and compiles events for *XLR8R*'s online City Guide, helping you in your quest to be that cool guy who knows about random happenings all over the country.

NACHO ALEGRE



Photographer Nacho Alegre lives and works in Barcelona, Spain. His photography has appeared *L'Uomo Vogue*, *Vogue Italia*, *GQ*, *Hercules magazine*, *Dazed and Confused*, and *Arena*. He's also done work for Vitra, Urban Outfitters, Levi's, Adidas, and Nike, and is the founder and editor of *Apartamento* magazine. For this issue of *XLR8R*, he shot cover stars Delorean in Barcelona.

[nachoalegre.com](http://nachoalegre.com)

TONY KATAI



Tony Katai is a freelance photographer from Detroit, MI, who enjoys making music, drinking beers, and riding his bike. He's been photographing people since he was about 13 years old, with a philosophy of always making his next photo better than his last. He photographed Anthony "Shake" Shakir and Kyle Hall for this issue's Detroit State of Mind feature.

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### XLR8R TV



#### NEW YORK, SWEDEN, AND BEYOND

Last month, we took the XLR8R TV cameras on the road, stopping in New York to interview the likes of locals Runaway and **Dutty Artz's Matt Shadetek** and **Jahdan Blakkamoore**, as well as checking in with Hemlock Recordings label head **Untold** during his visit for the Unsound Festival. After that, we hopped the ocean to Sweden, where we chatted with **The Crepes** and **Studio** in their Gothenburg, uh, studios, and then headed east to Stockholm to not only get the scoop on **Skweee** from **Daniel Savio**, **Mrs. Qeada**, **Pavan**, **Beem**, and **Rigas Den Andre**, but also catch them in a rare performance at a teen community center.

Check out all the crazed antics at XLR8R.com/tv, and come back every Tuesday for new episodes, including recent shows with **Paul Devro**, **Copy**, and **Christopher Willits**.

#### NEW CONTENT EVERY DAY AT XLR8R.COM

Check out music news and features, free MP3 downloads, and reviews updated every day, plus photo blogs, music videos, free PDF versions of XLR8R, and a whole lot more at [XLR8R.COM](http://XLR8R.COM).

### PODCAST



#### CITY GUIDE CRAZY, PLUS FLOATING POINTS AND SCHLACHTHOFBRONX

We get heavy on new city-specific mixes this month, so get your fill of music from all across the US courtesy of **Strategy** (in Portland), **Dubbel Dutch** (in Austin), **Ghetto Division** (in Chicago), and **Mike the 2600** (in Minneapolis). While you're at it, you could do worse than listen to our exclusive sets from the UK's **Floating Points** and Bavarian party-starters **Schlachthofbronx**.

Get your dose of can't-miss hotness and sign up for our weekly podcast at XLR8R.com, where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum, including new sets from **Motor City Drum Ensemble**, **Martyn**, **Shortstuff**, and more.

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#### JAN / FEB NO.131

An extra Q&A with Matías Aguayo on his Cómeme label

A trailer for Olivia Wyatt's upcoming film on Ethiopian tribal music

An episode of XLR8R TV with Bok Bok and L-Vis 1990

Luciano's full list of studio gear

Audio from Lindstrøm & Christabelle's favorite musical duets

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#### LOOK FOR THE XLR8R.COM EXTRAS ICON

This issue is filled with online extras, including extended interviews, photo outtakes, audio clips, and videos. See them at [XLR8R.COM/132EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/132EXTRAS)

## XLR8R'S "WET AND WILD SPRING BREAK" CONTEST

WIN ALL OF THE COOLEST JAMS JUST IN TIME FOR THAT RAGIN' SPRING BREAK PARTY.

The sunny days, moderate nights, and raging hormones of spring are nigh, and that means one thing (for some, many things for others): spring break! We may not all be in school, nor in desperate need of a vacation, but the spirit of spring break permeates the soul of just about every beer-drinking and water-loving individual from all walks of life. To win this issue's contest, tell us about your craziest spring break experience you've had in 200 words or less.

The most interesting submissions will score a grab bag of brand-new, smokin'-hot tunes from these here XLR8R pages. These jams, from the likes of **Lali Puna** (Morr), **High Places** (Thrill Jockey), **Nick Chacona** (Mood Music), **Scuba** (Hotflush), **Sharon Jones** (Dap-tone), **Delorean** (True Panther), **Anthony "Shake" Sha-**

**kir** (Rush Hour), and **Kyle Hall** (Hyperdub), will guarantee not only the most happening soundsystem at your next crazy house party, but a once-in-a-lifetime chance with that special someone you've been crushing on all semester—maybe.

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# NATALIE STORM



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WORDS TOMAS PALERMO

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A HOT GYAL MC BRINGS THE PERFECT STORM TO THE CLUBS WITH  
JAMAICAN POP, BASHMENT, AND GLOBAL BASS.

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Twenty-six-year-old Jamaican dancehall artist Natalie Cole is hot right now. How hot? "I was only wearing my bra and undies during the interview," she reveals when asked about her outfit that day, adding coyly, "I swear, I'm not flirting!" The bubbly, fashionista MC known for colorful hairstyles is warming up the dancehall scene with her glamorous global club music. Now friends and fans have latched on to her new nickname: *Hotalie*. "I was voicing a song and in the intro I said, 'A *Hotalie* Storm, a nuh Natalie again!' and people seemed to like it."

The new handle is apt. The last three years she's been on fire, recording UK funky tracks with Sticky, electro-pop with Danish producers Enur, doing mixtapes and tours with fellow female artists Tifa and Timberlee as T.N.T., and issuing solo dancehall singles. She produces, sings, writes lyrics for other artists, and makes cameos in dancehall videos. And if you missed any of that, not to worry—Cole tweets her exploits almost hourly.

The self-described "shy girl" born in rural Trelawny but raised in Kingston is definitely looking "*to di world*," as the patois expression goes. Cole has toured Canada, Europe, and the Eastern US, and enthusiastically incorporates global bass genres into her dancehall repertoire. She's even found symmetry between her earthy "Natalie" side, an Aquarian woman who likes to swim, dance, and write in her free time, and her alter-ego, "Storm," inspired by the *X-Men* character. "Natalie and Storm are two sides of me," she explains. "I like to wear jeans and t-shirts and kickback with a few brewskis or whatever, but the Storm

side of me is the person who will be up in your face, telling you like it is," she says.

She's been forward with the hits, too, recording with producers Jam 2, Seanizzle, Don Corleon, and Cordell "Skatta" Burrell. The turning point came in 2006 when she left the vocal group Make Boyz Cry and linked up with manager Dylan Powe, who promotes the weekly Passa Passa party. Cole recorded the Swatch (a.k.a. Swash) International-produced track "Talk Di Ting Dem," which became a hit and the Natalie Storm era began.

Cole says her future collabos will span R&B, pop, one-drop, calypso, and electro, genres in which she's already established her presence. She voiced five songs on Enur's 2008 album, *Raggatronic*, recorded "Look Pon Mi" on the Sticky-produced Jumeirah Riddim, and has plans to keep experimenting. "No matter what style I work with—electro, R&B, pop—I will always be representing Natalie Storm vibes," she says, describing her approach as a mix of patois vocals, electro sounds, and hardcore garrison beats. "It's a mash-up, a bashment sound."

True to her inclement name, and exuberant fashions, Cole looks to stay on the move. "I love being busy. For 2010, I don't want to limit myself; I'm just going to be breaking down doors, yo!"



# SUB MISSIONS

DUBSTEP PIONEER **KODE9** PROBES **THE NOISES OF STATE CONTROL AND UNDERGROUND MUSIC RESISTANCE.**



There's a scene in Steve Goodman's new book, ***Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and The Ecology of Fear*** (MIT Press), that burns deep into the memory. He places the reader in a 2005 incident where Israeli fighter jets shocked residents in a Gaza Strip neighborhood by flying low above their homes and firing a "sound bomb"—a resonating sound so powerful that it could suffocate your body. "You look around but see no damage. Jumping out of bed, you run outside. Again you see no damage," Goodman writes. "What happened?" Nosebleeds, anxiety attacks, and sleeplessness reportedly followed. The Israeli government assured that such a bomb was "preferable to real ones," Goodman later notes.

Welcome to a world where raw sound and music are used either as opiates, repellents, or a call to arms—drifting through the air like viruses. Goodman, who besides pioneering dubstep as Kode9 is a lecturer in music culture at the University of East London, ventures deep into the psychological dread evoked by sound in his provocative and often

troubling book. "I wanted the reader merely to be aware of the power relations going on with every act of listening," he says. His writing was heavily influenced by the notorious scene from the movie *Apocalypse Now* where General Kilgore blasts the operatic wails of Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyries" to terrorize a Vietnamese village while his fleet of helicopters blasts them to kingdom come. But similar tactics that Goodman discusses in the book are hardly fictional: Throughout *Sonic Warfare*, he points to military weapons used to blast high-frequency sounds to drive away looters in the ruins of Hurricane Katrina as well as "Mosquito" street devices that emit an irritating noise that only teenage ears can hear—the same tool sold to scare away rodents.

Goodman's explorations zigzag across history and science fiction, leaving behind a dizzying, often labyrinthine path for the mind to follow. Rather than simply documenting uses of sonic weaponry, Goodman views the war through the lens of various

philosophers and artists in an attempt to make sense of how vibrating sounds and their hidden messages affect the subconscious, whether it be the travels of loud dub reggae basslines from Jamaican soundsystems or the "earworms" that Muzak uses to tempt listeners into consuming products. And while he doesn't mention his own music in the book, Goodman is quick to point out that he has "learned a lot from any music that relies on frequencies at the edge of audibility, like dubstep used to with regards to sub-bass." And since sonic terrorism is invisible, Sun Tzu's notion of war as an act of deception particularly resonates here.

Goodman wisely avoids writing an anti-sonic war manifesto since there are too many sound viruses in the air—he simply wants to awaken you to that fact that you're caught in the crossfire. And there's no cease-fire in sight. *Cameron Macdonald*

***Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and The Ecology of Fear*** is out now on MIT Press. [mitpress.mit.edu](http://mitpress.mit.edu)

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While Lopatin may lean most heavily on his Roland Juno-60 for its thick, sweet, nostalgic-yet-futuristic sound, he's not averse to digital editing, but avoids simply slapping together

"spacy" tracks and calling it an astronaut's day. "One of the common misconceptions about *Rifts* is that it's about an astronaut 'lost in space,'" he cautions. "This isn't true. I'm working on a sci-fi novel called *Rifts*, and it operates more on the John Updike level of the astronaut as a civil worker living a life unfulfilled."

With that explanation, the drifting, overlapping melodies on "Zones Without People" suddenly evoke Bowman's hypertravel at the end of Kubrick's *2001*: epic, hazy, drug-like journeys to strange and powerful ends. "A Pact Between Strangers" works a sweet melody spiraling inward on itself against humming, almost subliminal bass keys, compressing and expanding time like Vangelis' hypnotic film scores.

With six years' of work on *Rifts* now complete, plans for worldlier directions are taking shape: adding drum machines to the synth mix, a "poppier" project called KGB Man who raps over chopped-and-screwed versions

of Oneohtrix-like soundscapes, and re-entry into the atmosphere for Oneohtrix: "The next record, which I'm doing for Mego, is something else altogether—a return to a state of earthly desires set against a rainforest backdrop. So perhaps it's moving more into the world of Gabriel Garcia Marquez."

Regardless how close Lopatin gets back to the present day, expect him to take inspiration from places only a scientist (or psychiatrist) might think to look. "I watched a line of people waiting to use a Coinstar Machine, and I got this beautiful melody stuck in my head that I pursued when I got home," he explains. "And a few nights ago I dreamed that I was a civil engineer in a post-war Eastern European country and the villagers were making demands of me to shift around certain territorial demarcation zones so as to accommodate their families. The subconscious has a way of telling you what you need to be doing."

[Hear tracks from \*Rifts\* at XLR8R.com/132extras.](http://XLR8R.com/132extras)

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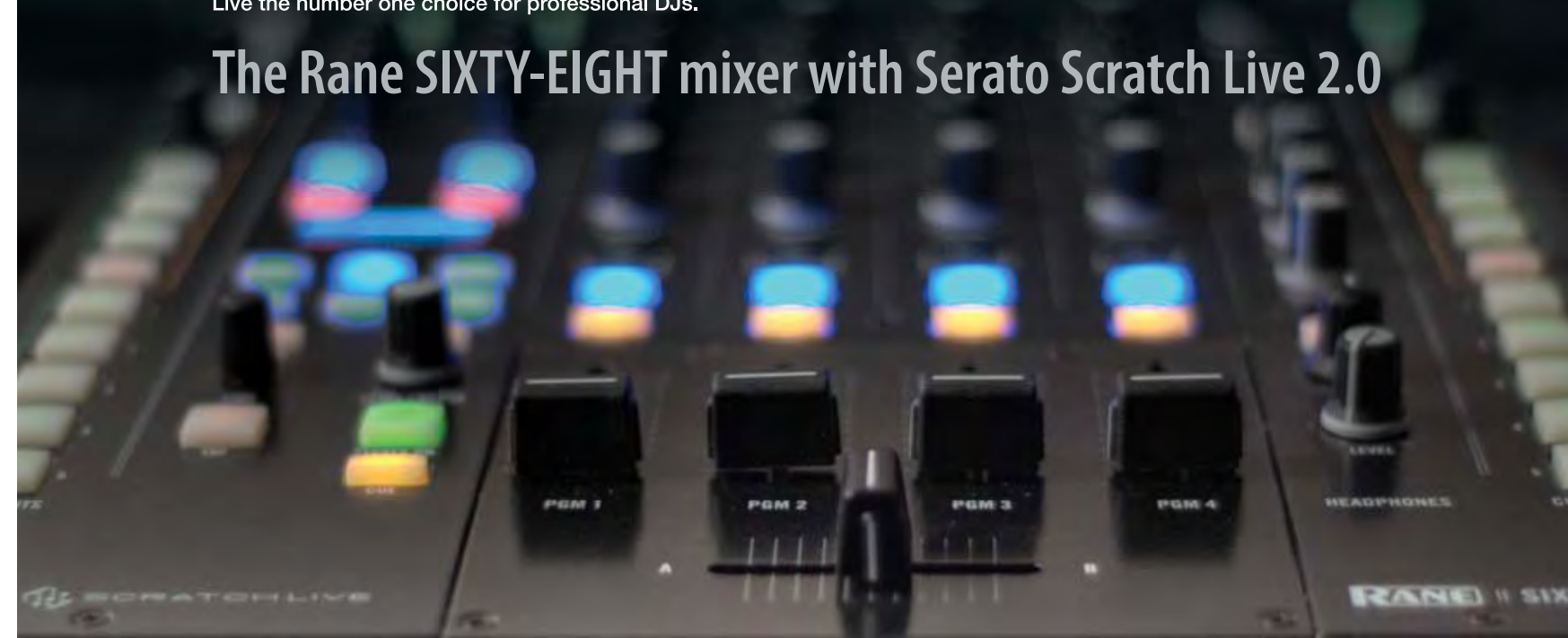
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# SPOEK MATHAMBO

THE SCHLACHTHOFBRONX AND SLUSH PUPPY KIDS MC  
BRINGS AFROFUTURISM TO THE NEXT LEVEL.



Sitting on the back of a truck rolling through foothills of the South African bush, Nthato Mokgata's cell phone keeps cutting out. Yet the 24-year-old rapper/DJ/singer/graphic designer, better known as Spok Mathambo, brims with cocksure swagger even while bouncing across the rural landscape to film a video with his dancers. When you're as busy as this dude, sometimes you have to do the walk-and-talk.

Spok specializes in playful, often dirty rhymes that at moments recall the sing-song stylings of Isis from Thunderheist or the potty mouth of Spank Rock's Naeem Juwan. On the recent "Punani," he incites female listeners to shake their bits atop French producer Douster's aggressively minimal Egyptian-style beats, rendering Spok a ravey pharaoh, while the amped-up "Jabajaws," helmed by Warsaw's Sekta, sees the MC bemoaning loose-lipped (and otherwise loose) women, intoning, "He said I said she said what/Shorty talk shit like she talk out her butt/Girl, go wipe your face/Get out my business/That ain't your place."

Against the backdrop of a thriving South African

dance music scene ("You go to any random club and hear bangers after bangers, and then you'll ask the DJ what this is and he'll say 'I made it,'" he explains), Spok's awareness of the need to keep it fresh drives his bedazzled hand to root around in numerous musical pots. He's constantly spewing forth singles and EPs with his groups Sweat.X, Slush Puppy Kids, and Playdoe, singing as Mleke Mbebe, DJing South African *kwaito* tunes as H.I.V.I.P., and collaborating with international producers like Schlachthofbronx and Djedtronic.

Historically, Spok has described his sound as "future primitivism"—invoking a tribal, trance-inducing power by wielding traditional African basslines while pushing next-level beats and raps. But at the turn of a dime, he lambastes himself for describing his work this way, insisting there is nothing retrospective about his own tracks, or any others currently emerging from the region. "In my own kind of slave mind, I thought that Africa meant a certain sense of the past. But Africa is strong and long every day. The fiber is so beyond primitivism. That's really condescending of me to have put it like that," he admits.

While this historical conception of 'Africa' may not directly influence his creations, Spok is quick to explain that his forthcoming solo album takes cues from the dark tone of local music created in the wake of apartheid and AIDS. "After apartheid and the heaviness of that kind of oppression, people just got into party mode. To a large degree, the AIDS pandemic was born out of that party mode," he explains. This cultural moment is reflected via his DJ moniker, H.I.V.I.P., meant to highlight the important convergence of oppression, promiscuity, and disease that marks a deceptively fun moment in the recent annals of African experience.

Though he has moved to Malmö, Sweden with his wife and sometime-collaborator Gnucci Banana, Spok has spent the first few months of 2010 back home in South Africa, recording his album and trying to reconnect with the newest sounds emanating from the streets. "Whenever I land I'll flick on the TV after 12 o'clock at night and it'll just be the maddest music," he ruminates. "It reminds me of when I was a kid and I'd want to record videos—because the stuff is so amazing!"

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◦ SPOEK MATHAMBO'S FIRST LP IS EXPECTED THIS SUMMER ON BBE RECORDS. THE JABAJAWS EP IS OUT NOW ON TOP BILLIN'. MYSPACE.COM/SPOEK



# TODD P GOES SOUTH

THIS MARCH, THE NYC PARTY PROMOTER ATTEMPTS TO BRIDGE THE SOCIO-POLITICAL GAP BETWEEN AMERICAN AND MEXICAN ARTISTS.

New York-based DIY event organizer Todd Patrick (known professionally as **Todd P**) is taking his business south of the border. In lieu of the South By Southwest-rival festival he has thrown in Austin for the last four years, Mr. P hopes that his new MtyMx All Ages Festival of Art and Music, held a few hours south in Monterrey, will change the US perception of Mexico while uniting more than 100 bands from both sides of the border, combining the likes of Fucked Up and Telepathe with XYX, Ratas del Mexicano, and Los Lllamarada. *XLR8R* caught the busy party planner between flights to discuss artist relations in today's socio-political climate.

Lulu McAllister



**XLR8R: What do you hope festival-goers will get out of their experience besides good music?**  
 Todd P: I hope, in the case of folks from the States, they'll see a country they thought they knew from TV and movies, and find that the people who live there are more like them than they thought. In the case of people from Mexico, I'm hoping they'll see that their artists in the indie circles are just as good as the international ones. It's all one conversation being had and, even though they tend to get shut out of it because of restrictive laws on our side, they are every bit—especially with the internet—as plugged in as anybody on the States' side.

**How did you end up partnering with Monterrey-based promoters Yo Garage?**  
 I go to Mexico quite often for vacation. Last year, a few kids and I went down to Monterrey, which is not a city I've ever spent much time in. It's not exactly the classic Mexico that people think of; it's

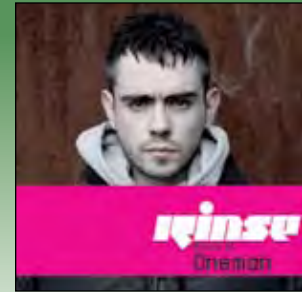
not the Old World. It has more in common with a city in Texas. I asked people I knew [there], [the members of] Los Lllamarada, about whether they could help me out. Those guys are all professionals with nine-to-five jobs, which has coincidentally worked in with the politics of the thing—it allowed them to get visas to come into the States. (You have to show that you've had a job for a long time and there's no chance that you're going to come into America and steal one of our jobs.) They were able to put me in touch with the only people they knew who *didn't* have nine-to-five jobs, who were Ricardo [Franco] and Leila [Castro], who run Yo Garage. So after South By last year we spent four days hanging out in Monterrey and got to talking about

how perfect it would be to make that a location for a festival right after SXSW.

**What has been the biggest challenge with the production?**  
 I thought it would be getting people over the stereotype that Americans have [of Mexico], but people have been surprisingly open-minded, trusting that we're not going to send them to something that's unsafe... The festival is a useful cultural exchange that's good for the economy of Monterrey and for the international image of Mexico, but we still thought it would be hard to convince government officials of this, to the point that they would use their precious arts funding to

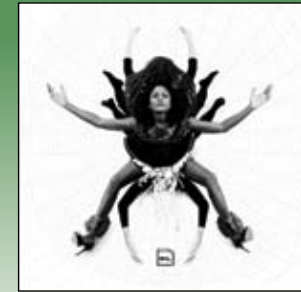
pay for it. Yet, we were able to put a pile of press clippings down on the desk of the people in charge (various institutions within Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, and Mexico), and they were very excited about this project. They're helping us figure out visa stuff, buses on the Mexico side—lots of little logistical things. Those same press clippings wouldn't get me anywhere in the US.

**MtyMx happens March 20-22 at the Autocinema Las Torres drive-in theater in Monterrey, Mexico. Find out more about tickets, shuttle buses, and accommodations at [toddpnyc.com](http://toddpnyc.com).**



**ONEMAN**  
*Rinse: 11 CD*

Volume 11 of the Rinse label's compilation series, mixed by Oneman, who takes this installment on a party-focused excursion through the sounds of London's underground rave scene. Martyn, Geeneus and Ms. Dynamite, Joy Orbison, Joker, Starkey, Bok Bok, Zomby, and more all feature here with the mix straddling the energy of his Rinse show and live set.



**JAHCOOZI**  
*Barefoot Wanderer CD*

Producing sounds in the most varied worlds of BPM counts and bass variations, Jahcoozi merge genres like grime, baile funk, and Jamaican-inspired future dub in the same pioneering spirit as Diplo and M.I.A. Their most diverse record yet includes guests M. Sayyid (Antipop Consortium), Barbara Panther and Kenyan reggae crew Ukoo Flani.



**RAFAEL TORAL**  
*Space Elements Vol. II LP*

The second installment in the *Space Elements* series marks a new area in Rafael Toral's jazz-inspired re-evaluation of live electronics and features a new set of collaborators, including Evan Parker, Manuel Mota and Stefano Tedesco. "Torale is looking for nothing less than a totally fresh language to work in." —The Wire



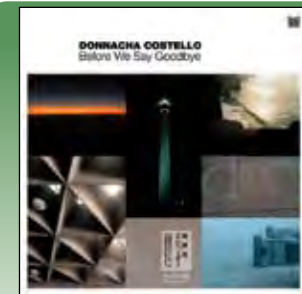
**KASPER BJØRKE**  
*Standing On Top Of Utopia CD/LP*

Kasper Bjørke is thriving in the heart of the Copenhagen electronic scene and his second album is a multi-genre journey with glittering analog synth jams, throbbing post-disco trips and dark electronic club tools. Overflowing with first-class studio and musical ability, featuring guest vocalists Louise Foo (Giana Factory) and Tomas Höfding (WhoMadeWho).



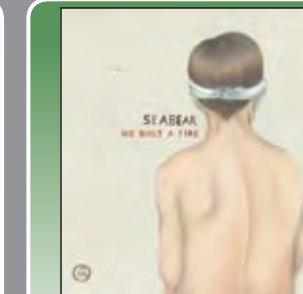
**ALEX SMOKE**  
*Lux CD*

Scotland's Alex Smoke returns with the release of *Lux*, his eagerly-anticipated third album on his own Hum+Haw imprint. *Lux* delves into more abstract territory while retaining the melancholic musicality and cohesion of its predecessors, formulating a dense and original atmospheric album that invades your soul and melts your mind.



**DONNACHA COSTELLO**  
*Before We Say Goodbye CD*

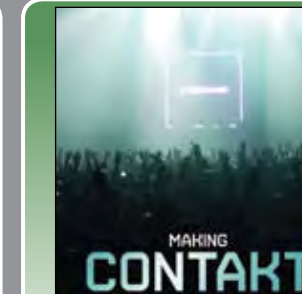
One of today's leading minimal techno artists, Donnacha Costello's first full-length for Poker Flat is an exquisite work, with echoes of Chicago house, Detroit techno and UK ambient flowing through Costello's exploration of rich synth themes and emotive harmonies.



**SEABEAR**  
*We Built A Fire CD/2CD/LP*

*We Built A Fire* is the second full-length album by Iceland's Seabear. "Intimate and captivating pop that will equally attract nostalgic fans of the early Shins and Sufjan Stevens albums and the lovers of the great solitudinarians from José Gonzales to Elliot Smith."

—Les Inrockuptibles



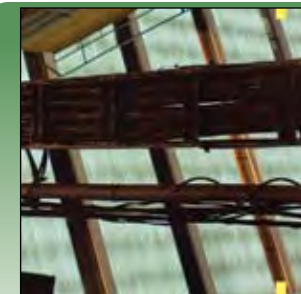
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Making Kontakt CD/DVD*

The M\_nus label releases a CD/DVD documenting the M\_nus crew's 2008 10 year anniversary label showcase tour, *Contact*—a free-flowing, improvisational show involving the label's top DJs and live performers backed up by state-of-the-art visuals. Includes a CD compilation of music from Hearthrob, Cybersonik, JPLS, Richie Hawtin, and more.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*2010 CD*

Hamburg's Dial Records rose to fame with its signature take on deep house and minimal techno, with landmark releases by the likes of Efdemin and Pantha Du Prince. 2010 celebrates 10 years of the evocative label's existence, featuring all new material from Dominique, Lawrence, Carsten Jost, Christian Naujoks and more.



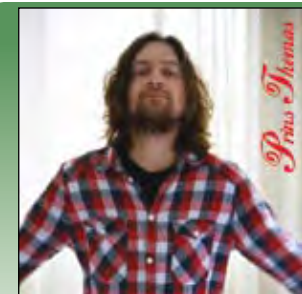
**FENN O'BERG**  
*In Stereo CD/2LP*

After an almost 9 year hiatus, the electronic supergroup of Christian Fennesz, Jim O'Rourke and Peter Rehberg return with a new studio album. *In Stereo*'s wider instrumental palette of analog and digital synthesis creates a near-psychedelic audio blend of guitar, piano, bass and percussion with the trio's legendary digital madness.



**YELLOW SWANS**  
*Going Places CD/LP+CD*

American noise duo Yellow Swans' final album is one of the most haunting and engrossing albums yet to appear on the Type label. Comparisons could be made to Tim Hecker or even Brian Eno in parts, but Yellow Swans' harsher edge finds beauty in dense cacophony. LP version includes a bonus CD of extra material.



**PRINS THOMAS**  
*Prins Thomas CD/2LP*

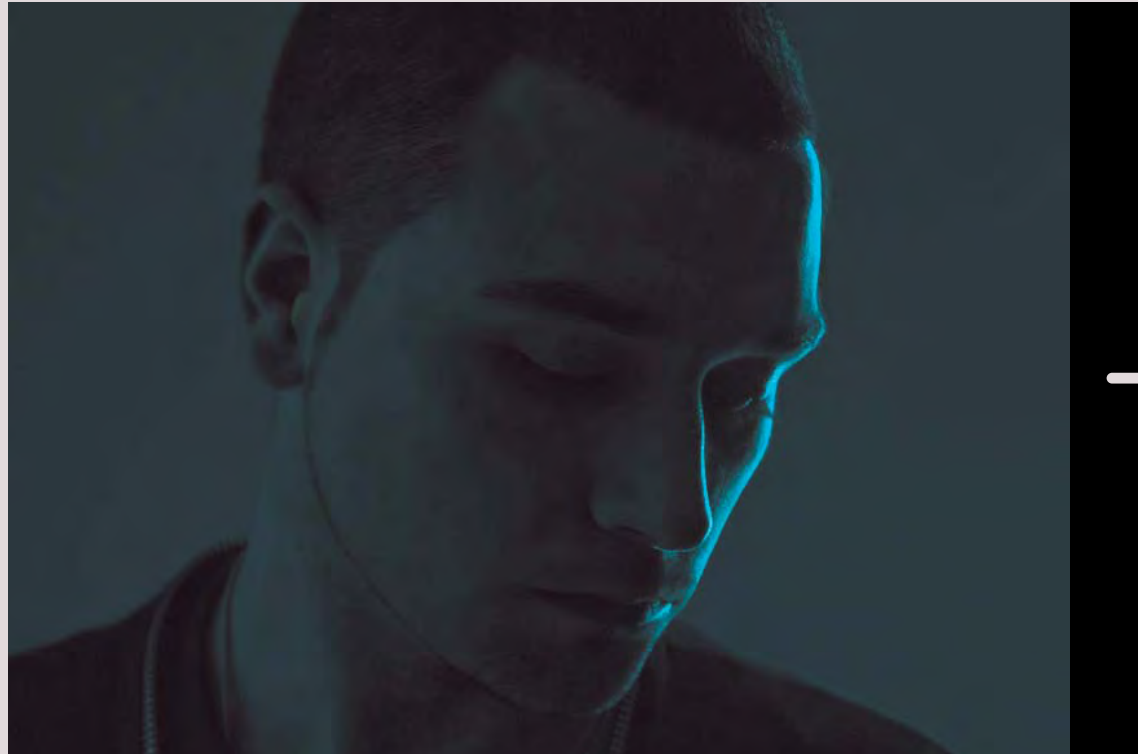
The first solo full-length release by the Norwegian disco superstar showcases his myriad musical gifts over 7 body-moving, head-nodding tracks, perfectly assembled for an hour-long trip. A funky, sumptuous space party, with Neu!-like guitar lines, kosmische keyboards and guests Lindstrøm and Todd Terje.

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# MOSCA

LETTING POST-GARAGE BANGERS SIMMER WITH  
AYLESBURY, UK'S CHOW-SLINGING FLY GUY.



Twenty-three-year-old UK producer Mosca is exactly where he wants to be in life: hovering above fetid labels like "club," "house," "bashment," "garage," and "grime." Dance music heads in the UK and beyond clamor for his meticulous, minimalist room-shakers; he's currently finishing remixes of Four Tet and Foals, and working on a follow-up to his hit debut EP, *Square One*; Fabric just released his track "Gold Bricks, I See You" on their January *Elevator Music* compilation; he'll be carting tons of vinyl ("If you can't mix two pieces of vinyl, you're not a DJ," he offers) to clubs in Bristol, London, Poland, Copenhagen, and beyond this year; and...

"I just got five bookings in one day the other day," he remarks. "This whole music thing's kicked off."

His secret for dealing with it all? "Patience," says Mosca, born Tom Reid in Aylesbury, UK. "I'm in no rush to get anything out for the sake of it. When it comes out, I'll be happy with it 100 percent." It's not the most efficient way to work, but it's guided him artistically.

In fact, Reid spent eight months crafting his EP's b-side, "Nike," while working in food service and

considering a career in journalism. (He's also the founder of *Bruk* magazine.) The track alights on a wacked-out beat reminiscent of Madlib, before an 8-bit Casio solo starts ripping it up. It's dubby as hell, transforming into a skittering garage groove four minutes into the 10-minute epic. It feels intuitive, yet surprising. "I always start with a beat," he explains. "I don't start out with something in mind. I just think, 'I want this to be hectic' or 'a banger.' I don't worry about scales or breakdowns; mainly getting the beats and the bass happy."

Reid produces on a simple PC running Reason. He plays bits of piano, keyboards, and drums, but mainly draws on eight years' of samples that skew to his affection for reggae and dub, as interpolated by North London and parts even farther North. "If you can sit down at the computer and turn it on, start some loop up, and eight hours later still be there listening to the same loops—you haven't eaten or gone to the toilet—if you're still hypnotized and enraptured [by] it, then you know you're on the right track," he says. "If you're not sure, sometimes the best thing to do is delete it.

Even if you spent a month on it. Just delete and you'll come up with something better the second time."

His name (which is Spanish for "fly," meaning "cool" and a shit-eating insect) is a nod to the recombinant nature of art in the age of mass production. "I like the idea of feeding off other people. Nothing's original anymore." Which is partially a lie—"Nike" is definitely one of a kind. And although *Square One* was released on L-Vis 1990 and Bok Bok's Night Slugs imprint, Reid remains unsigned because he worries that associating with a particular label will brand his peculiar style for life. Instead, he's content to float above it all. "It's quite a big thing for me," he says. "However broad your label, there are certain connotations attached with every [one]. They get lumped very quickly with a certain type of sound or scene and it's not really about that. I can happily play just a straight bashment night, and think, 'Man, that was nice not having to play house or play what's in at the moment.'"

MOSCA'S SQUARE ONE EP IS OUT NOW ON NIGHT SLUGS.  
MYSFACE.COM/DEEJAYMOSCA

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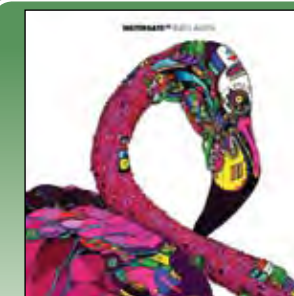
## New Releases Distributed by FORCED EXPOSURE



**THOMAS FEHLMANN**  
*Gute Luft: Original Soundtrack From The "24H Berlin" TV Documentary CD/2LP*

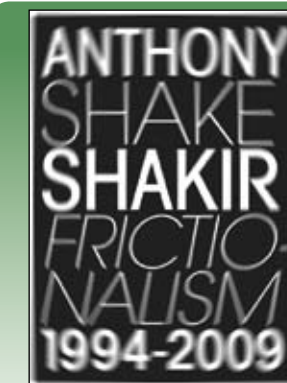
From his work with **The Orb**, **3MB** and **Palais Schaumburg**, **Thomas Fehlmann** is one of the most recognized names in electronic music. Fans of **Basic Channel**, Detroit techno and house can rejoice, as his score for *24H Berlin* is the quintessential document of the past 30 years of Berlin's electronic music history.

**KOMPAKT**



**ELLEN ALLIEN**  
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Ellen Allien remains one of the most influential artists of the Berlin scene and her solo appearances at the famous Watergate Club have always been special nights. Artists such as **Luciano**, **Röyksopp**, **AGF/Delay**, **Margaret Dygas** and many more appear on her installment in the Watergate mix series.



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*Frictionalism 1994-2009 3CD*

Rush Hour presents a deluxe 3CD compilation of Detroit techno legend **Anthony "Shake" Shakir's** best work from the past 15 years. Newly remastered, this is some of the deepest, funkier and most diverse techno that shaped the sounds of everyone from **Juan Atkins** to **Derrick May**.



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# LEAVE THEM ALL BEHIND

WORDS MICHAEL HARKIN PHOTOS NACHO ALEGRE

AS THEY PREPARE TO UNVEIL THEIR BREAKTHROUGH ALBUM, BARCELONA POP OUTFIT **DELOREAN** DITCHES THE BAND FORMAT AND EXCITEDLY RACES INTO THE FUTURE.





●  
It was only recently,

after having been together for nearly a decade, that Barcelona-based quartet Delorean had their biggest breakthrough: They didn't need to be a "band" anymore, at least not in the conventional sense. It's this epiphany that explains the group's dissatisfaction with their most widely acclaimed release to date, last year's ecstatic, gloriously immediate *Ayrton Senna* EP (Mushroom Pillow/Fool House). "We were not very happy with it musically," explains singer and bassist Ekhi Lopetegi, over the phone from Spain. "It sounds too clean and too obvious. We were still sounding like a four-piece band." They had undoubtedly made a sturdy, infectious disc by any listener's standards, but it's only with the realization of their newest record, *Subiza*, that the band has achieved the kind of lush electronic production they've been striving for.

Delorean started out 10 years ago, when its members were teenagers living in the coastal Basque town of Zarautz, about 20 minutes outside of San Sebastian in Spain. There, Lopetegi met drummer Igor Escudero, keyboardist Unai Lazcano, and the band's original guitarist, Tomas Palomo. Away from their straight-ahead punk bands—each of them was entrenched in the local hardcore scene—Delorean was their pop project, and though they were initially heavily influenced by emo and hardcore, pop and electronic sounds would gradually shift to the forefront of their music.

Until 2007, says Lopetegi, Delorean was still a punk band, but there is, as he points out, an aesthetic continuity in all of their work. As he explains it, "the common background to the different periods of Delorean is club music." It only plays a peripheral role on their 2004 self-titled debut for BCore Disc, an angst-ridden punk record colored by '80s new wave instrumentation. But its follow-up, 2005's *Metropolitan Death* EP, showcased their increasing fondness for the dark, minimal pulses proliferated by Kompakt and Border Community, and that affinity manifests itself even more apparently on the 2006 full-length *Into the Plateau*. This album bridged their love



"IT SOUNDED TOO CLEAN AND TOO OBVIOUS."



WE WERE STILL SOUNDING LIKE A FOUR-PIECE BAND."



of goth-punk and German minimal house in quite compelling fashion. Following that album, Palomo departed the band, and was replaced by guitarist Guillermo Astrain in 2008, by which point everyone in the group had moved to Barcelona.

"After 2007, we just spent a lot of time without making any songs," says Lopetegi. "It was time for us to rethink stuff, as we just started to be a little fed up with the techno scene." Their tastes fanned out considerably as they got into grime, piano house, ghettech (especially DJ Assault and DJ Funk), bassline house—"all sorts of club music" alongside hip-hop, R&B, and older, elaborately produced pop bands like Prefab Sprout and Cocteau Twins. This blossoming of taste is evident in one of Delorean's most notable contributions to the Barcelona music scene: Desparrame, a club night and mixtape-filled blog they co-curate with DJ K\*\*O (pronounced "Kigo"/"key-go"), part of the Plat Du Jour crew and a friend of theirs from Basque Country. Heading into the project in early 2008, the band was unsatisfied with the nightlife locally on offer. Barcelona techno clubs, says Lopetegi,

were "not a scene for the kind of club music we'd like to listen to," naming bassline and dubstep as two genres notably missing from dancefloors. To combat this absence, Delorean translated their joyous, adventurous musical vision into Desparrame, hosting parties with Radioclit, Numbers' Jack "Jackmaster" Revill, and Finland's Top Billin', among others. "I started to have fun for the first time with our own parties," exclaims Lopetegi with palpable conviction. "Like *truly* fun, in a small club with friends... not super-dark techno, it's more bouncy and friendly."

The newfound, hard-earned sense of fun conjured by these club nights played a great deal into Delorean's transition from techno-influenced punk to airy, ecstatic pop. The aforementioned *Ayrtón Senna* EP, named for the late Brazilian racecar driver and Formula One champion, marked an enormous stylistic leap forward for the band: Three cuts of bright, breezy pop infused with the beat and effervescent spirit of house, held together by savvy songwriting and sharp production. Opening track "Deli,"

for example, is one of the freshest, most satisfying dance tracks of last year, direct and affecting in its simplicity of form and lyrical sentiment: "*I like the time I spend with you, girl/With you, girl.*" Though the band was pleased with the attention it garnered, they now see the EP mostly as a stepping stone to *Subiza*, a record the band seems genuinely proud of.

Since recording *Ayrtón Senna*, Delorean's way of writing, producing, and working as a band has changed a great deal, and it has everything to do with remixing. Up to and concurrent with the recording of *Subiza*, a large portion of the band's time was spent doing remixes for other artists, including The Big Pink, Mystery Jets, Glasser, and Franz Ferdinand. Their remix of The xx's "Islands" was recently released, while remixes for Cold Cave and Tanlines are in the works. All this remix work has increased Delorean's sound palette considerably, but more importantly, it's brought about the band-wide realization that purely live instrumentation wasn't necessarily ideal for their desired end result.

"The sound [of *Subiza*] is more related to our remixes than the EP that we released before," explains Lopetegi of their new, primarily computer-based composition process. The band has their own studio in Barcelona, in which they could be found every day, nonstop, for the first half of 2009, laboring on their individual computers to write and arrange their new album. "What we didn't like about the [*Ayrtón Senna*] EP was that it was still halfway from the live rock sound to actual electronic production." Although Lopetegi and Escudero play bass and drums respectively, neither ended up playing a single live bass or drum part on *Subiza*. The band used Cubase and Nuendo to sequence, sample, arrange, and write melodies on the members' four individual computers, sending song ideas back and forth between each individual member, each one adding rhythms, keyboards, synths—reshaping the track at will. "We decided if it sounded better to use a plug-in sub-bass bassline that we would do it," Lopetegi says. "What mattered to me was the final result of the song, not whether it was played live."

When the work at their own studio was finished, they entered Hans Krüger's studio in Pamplona, where the necessary work proved to be much different than what Delorean was used to. With each song—for instance, "Warmer Places," which Lopetegi says has over 80 individual tracks—each and every track would be bounced one at a time into the mixing board, sometimes with added analog reverb. At the studio, they recorded vocals, guitars, and some keyboards—everything else on the record had been produced electronically. After cleaning everything up, each track was bounced from the mixing board to an analog tape recorder and back to Krüger's computer, where the pre-mix was completed. In the end, their studio time was spent mostly transferring tracks and only partly recording—hardly a typical studio experience for a pop band, especially one that had been used to recording and performing everything live.

Mixing *Subiza* proved to be just as atypical of a process: a trans-Atlantic effort with veteran engineer Chris Coady (Telepathe, !!!, Lemonade, TV on the Radio) requiring live communication with the band via iChat. "He would send us a link, we would open it with iTunes, and we would listen to what he was doing in the studio in real time," says Lopetegi, reimagining the process: "'Chris, why don't you turn up that drum snare? Or turn down the vocals? The bass is too loud...'. It was a weird way to work, very new to us, but it's 2010 and these kinds of things happen."

The end result has an overwhelming, enveloping warmth to it. *Subiza* is certainly their most soulful statement yet: the resulting sound, while difficult to pin down, might bring to mind diva-graced dubstep filtered through Primal Scream's take on acid house, or, alternately, the swirling, elaborately constructed feel of My Bloody Valentine's shoegaze-raver classic, "Soon." The layered, tightly woven drum tracks and keyboards of album opener "Stay Close," for instance, add up to a kaleidoscopic banger with a wistful, urban air. Delorean melds their myriad influences into a new, unmistakable shape, creating a record that offers immediate, ecstatic pleasures, yet requires hundreds of listens to begin to unravel.

It's such a densely constructed album that one cannot help but wonder how it would sound live. "We cannot translate 100% of the record," says Lopetegi of performing these new recordings, which will require several synths to recreate on stage; there are, after all, up to 30 percussion tracks and several layers of keyboards and synths on each song on *Subiza*. As Lopetegi explains, one keyboard line might be played with a piano, but in the next verse, it'll be played with a Korg Mono/Poly. These sorts of difficulties, Lopetegi emphasizes, are surmountable, and the album's stunning end result is a victory for substance over any concerns the band may have had about integrity. If the transformations brought about by *Subiza* are any indication, performing these songs live is the closest that Delorean will ever come to repeating themselves—a destiny that Lopetegi makes clear that the band wishes to avoid—and complexities aside, their *modus operandi* remains pretty simple. "We just want to have cool songs!" ■

*Subiza* is out this spring on True Panther Sounds. [myspace.com/deloreananz](http://myspace.com/deloreananz)



Watch Delorean's video tour of Barcelona at [XLR8R.com/132extras](http://XLR8R.com/132extras).



# DETROIT

WORDS WALTER WASACZ PHOTOS TONY KATAI

# STATE

# OF

# MIND



**KYLE HALL** LEADS THE MOTOR CITY'S  
NEW GENERATION OF PRODUCERS  
WHILE **ANTHONY "SHAKE" SHAKIR**  
AND THE OLD GUARD QUIETLY KEEP  
PUSHING THINGS FORWARD.



There is an oft-repeated truism in the Detroit dance underground that goes something like this:

If you're an artist, say a producer or DJ with tunes so good the buzz follows you all over the world, never forget that you come from a place that doesn't care about who you are or what you do. A star on the decks in Bremen or Brussels is just like everybody else at home: struggling to hold it together in a tough town where celebrity status strokes the ego, nothing more. There are no adoring fans, no lucrative residencies, scant local media attention. The scene you represent is what you carry around in your head, heart, and soul, *baby*. It gives a whole new meaning to the term "indie," once interchangeable with an ideal called "community." Not here. Not this time.

For a city that has historically produced so much stunning, globally endorsed music—post-WWII blues, gospel, Motown, radical space jazz; The Stooges, The MC5, and late-'90s garage rock; experimental hip-hop and electronic dance music so revered that it's simply called "Detroit" everywhere else—it can be one static and lonely place. But one where no one bothers to care what you do, making it a perfect milieu, it turns out, for creativity of all sorts.

Things here are so wide open that massive tracts of land have literally returned to nature, often leaving the city's sounds muffled, vague, and disembodied. Voices in an alley, feral animal squawks in empty fields, the clang of unseen machinery, a crash somewhere in the distance; echoes and effects, reverb and delay, grimy, low-end junkyard crunch: all surrounded by spectral silence.

It's one of the most alien urban landscapes in the world, shaped by (failed) imperial industrial destiny and alluring, hyper-documented decline. People have been leaving since the middle of the last century, when two million inhabited the city proper; now some are returning in a trickle, lured by the possibility of "anything goes." Psychogeographers, futurists, new millennial pioneers, seekers of fertile (un)real estate, activist-designers, poet-revolutionaries, dreamers, schemers, sculptors, filmmakers, artist-farmers: making it feel a bit like New York did around 1975, a delirious and magical place. But only just, mind you, a glimmer.

Life is not all phantasmagorical ponderings in Detroit, of course. There are slightly more practical matters, like tracking down the soul and inspiration seemingly embedded in the heartbeat of the city. It's here, of course, but where? The proof is in the product, surging once again, breathing new life into a variety of scenes and styles in the UK and continental

Europe. You can hear it in the sounds of Berlin's mysterious Redshape, in the soulfully efficient grooves of Stuttgart's appropriately named Motor City Drum Ensemble, even in the futuristic techno-dubstep crossover of Bristol's Peverelist. But to actually locate the sound on its native soil, you have to turn over every rock in a city so physically huge that urban downsizing advocates are fond of saying that Boston, San Francisco, and Manhattan Island could all easily fit into its 143 square miles.

For our purposes, we start on Detroit's northwest side, an extraordinary place, not by physical appearance, but for its many gifts to the dance music imagination. This is the neighborhood where Robert Hood, Kelli Hand, Mike Huckaby, and Anthony "Shake" Shakir grew up. Juan Atkins once lived a few blocks away, after leaving his suburban Belleville home (about 25 miles west of Detroit) to go pro in the big city. Kyle Hall, the freshest face in Detroit house music to come along in a generation, lives nearby. His lessons came in stages: from a musical family at an early age, formal academics at the Detroit School for the Arts, and after-school training at Youthville, a non-profit community development center where he was mentored by Huckaby, and others, in music technology, composition, and practice.

In Shake's spare-bedroom studio—which contains vinyl stacked from corner to corner, a mixer, two turntables, and a single speaker—he answers the question perfectly before I can even ask it. "I found the vibe through Eddie Fowlkes, he was the first one. Then Derrick (May) asked me to be part of the Detroit scene," Shakir says. "But I can't find it anymore, man. Maybe it's just me, but you can't go looking for it. It has to find you."

Well, amen. There might be no one better suited to unravel Motor City mystification than Shakir, who's been producing since about 1981, which dates his work alongside projects launched by first generation producers Atkins, May, Fowlkes and Kevin Saunderson. His track, "Sequence 10," was on the seminal *Techno! The New Dance Sound of Detroit*, a comp organized by Virgin Records' scout



Neil Rushton that broke the sound worldwide in 1988.

Shakir collaborated with Kenny Dixon Jr. (a.k.a. Moodymann) and Sherard Ingram in the electro-funk experimental group Urban Tribe, worked with then-fledgling artists "Mad Mike" Banks, Dan Bell, and Claude Young, and did edits for Carl Craig. Set back by a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis in 2000 ("I felt a tingling in my hands. I started falling down," he says), Shakir walks with a cane but has still played out as a DJ over the last decade, though his original works ceased.

His talents have come into proper perspective with the release of a massive three-CD set on the Dutch Rush Hour label called *Frictionalism 1994-2009*, which collects hard-to-find genre-bending jams like "Here, There and Nowhere," "Fact of the Matter," "Detroit State of Mind," "Mr. Gone is Back Again,"

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"BEING AROUND ALL THESE GUYS  
JUST PREPARES ME FOR WHAT  
TO EXPECT IN THIS WORLD."

— KYLE HALL

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and dozens of others, including white-label rarities. He was one of the few in the Detroit scene to use a sampler (Craig being a notable other), embrace hip-hop techniques and electro, break up and roll out ill beats, and call out house and techno as being two sides of the same coin.

"Everybody was going to Chicago back then to check out that shit, man, but I didn't make there it until 1986," Shakir says. "I wasn't a self-starter like Juan, Kevin, and Derrick. I didn't go to parties; still don't. Just went my own way. Could've done more, I guess, but I wasn't the adventurous type. I didn't sell out either. Maybe too stupid to do that," he says with a laugh.

No, he didn't; and no, he isn't. Shakir might be one of the last of the great underground soul-jazz-pop survivors, whose ear brought him as close to Michael Jackson, Prince, and Coltrane as it did to Daft Punk, Heaven 17, and Radiohead. The road back to soul-stirring dancefloor authenticity can start with Shake, it can be argued, whose crossover productions paved the way for younger European artists like Scuba, Ramadanman, and Martyn to do the same.

The next day, Shakir was on a plane to New York to play the Unsound Festival with ~scape's Barbara Preisinger and fellow Detroiters Huckaby, all part of

a program at the Bunker at Public Assembly in Brooklyn celebrating a "house renaissance worldwide."

On the phone a few days later, Huckaby told me "it was good, real good." A versatile, invaluable player in the scheme of all things Detroit-related (producer/DJ/instructor/ambassador) over the past 20 years, Huckaby was cited by Omar S as one of the major inspirations (Scott Grooves the other) for his stripped-down dub-house production and DJ style.

Most recently, Huckaby has released house and dub-techno tracks on his own Deep Transportation and SYNTH imprints, and has remixed Loco Dice, Vladislav Delay, Pole, Mikkell Metal, Losoul, Deep Chord, and Atkins on ~scape, Echocord, Echospace, Playhouse, Third Ear, and others. When asked why the Detroit techno soul vibe was alive and kicking in 2010, Huckaby, known for his direct, no-bullshit responses shot back: "Is it alive and kicking? Honestly, I'm so immersed in what I do, I don't even look up to notice sometimes."

Have you noticed a change in the programming at clubs like London's Fabric or Berlin's Berghain, from what became generic minimal that dominated the '00s to something more authentic and real?

"Be careful when you say 'minimal,'" cautions Huckaby. "The original sound of minimal techno was made by artists like Rob Hood from Detroit, and Basic Channel from Berlin. The minimal sound of today has blended fashion, drugs, and sex into the definition, leaving the listener in a haze without any connection to the music, or to its history."

And the authenticity of Detroit music? Reality or myth?

"Everything is a DIY approach in Detroit. From release to release, there is always a struggle. Struggling to get a good cut, a flawless master, and the financial means to release the music," Huckaby says. "So in the end, the music that you hear released is always something that is someone's best production. It's too expensive to release mediocre music. You can always hear that element regarding the quality of a Detroit music production."

Huckaby says the Detroit work ethic matched "the German model of efficiency," creating relationships with Berlin crews from Tresor and Hard Wax in the 1980s and 1990s that remain intact to this day.

He uses those approaches as a teacher at Youthville, an avocation that Huckaby says "is the sole reason I have not moved to Europe. I'd rather be in an environment where I have a positive impact on someone's life, not just being where popularity exists."

Impact was assured when one of his students, the 18-year-old Hall, broke out in 2009 on some of the world's biggest stages for electronic music performance. Hall remixed one of the year's quirkiest singles, Darkstar's "Aidy's Girl is a Computer," for Steve Goodman's London-based Hyperdub label. He'd already recorded an EP (for Omar S's FXHE) in 2007, another for Mike Grant's Moods & Grooves in 2008, and started his own Wild Oats label the same year. Hall recently played Fabric and Berlin's Panorama Bar and appears at a showcase this month celebrating 25 years of Detroit dance-music domination at Miami's Winter Music Conference. The party includes pretty sweet company: Kenny Larkin, Stacey

Pullen, *XLR8R* scribe Monty Luke, Theo Parrish, Saunderson, Atkins, Craig, and Dixon Jr.

He has new tracks out this year on Hyperdub ("Kaychunk" b/w "You Know What I Feel"), Instra:mental's Nonplus, Warp, and Craig's Planet E. In addition to Huckaby's mentoring, Hall has been the beneficiary of practical instruction at the hands of Detroit house vets Rick Wilhite, Marcellus Pittman of Three Chairs, and the hard funk influences of Pirahnahead, the multi-talented Maurice Herd whose career began as a teenage guitarist with one of George Clinton's P-Funk All-Stars lineups.

"Being around all these guys just prepares me for what to expect from different situations in this [dance-music] world," says Hall, who started DJing when he was 11. "I've just been around house music all my life. I remember hearing it at home when I was five. Now it's an everyday thing, and I'm working on it all the time."

Work is the operative word around here, even in the midst of the city's harsh economic realities. But resourceful artists are taking advantage of opportunities in Detroit that might not be affordable or sustainable elsewhere, driven to make something out of nothing.

Aaron Siegel, an independent business owner in his late 20s who started a company called FIT—a label and distribution enterprise he runs out of building on Detroit's near west side—is on a mission to get vital Detroit music into the hands of people around the world. FIT's first release is an EP by Pittman, "Erase the Pain." Parrish has new product (the *Suggested Use* mix CD) on his Sound Signature label; Andrés (a.k.a. DJ Dez)—a protégé of both the late J Dilla and KDJ—crosses over from hip-hop to silky house on *II*, his 2009 full-length on KDJ's Mahogani Music. And Aaron-Carl, who broke out of the underground in the mid-1990s with homo-erotic club hits "Down" and "Dance Naked" is producing, performing, and—most importantly, he says—engaging the Detroit dance communities by reminding them just why they got in the business. He's not content to be a lone wolf in the urban wilderness. He wants to see the music gather steam here, and be that much stronger when Detroit rolls out its talent around the world.

"We don't love each other the way we must to keep moving our scene forward," Aaron-Carl says. "We get so much of what we need overseas that we believe we don't have to work at it when we're home. But we do."

So Aaron-Carl decided to turn up the temperature and form a collective called W.A.R.M.T.H.—what he calls a revolutionary movement bringing techno and house closer together on its home turf. Yes, that warming trend you feel spreading out over global clubland is an organic product of Detroit's basic DNA. But it's getting a little help from its friends who want

to make sure homegrown vibes keep coming at you in the right direction.

"I feel I'm in a good position in my life to do this now," he says. "Detroit has a spirit that you can't really see but you can feel it. The only way I can put it is it just *is*. We don't have marketing or media, unless we do it ourselves. We primarily just make the music, sometimes by accident, because it comes from some place I can't explain. Can you?"

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*"YOU CAN'T GO LOOKING FOR  
[THE VIBE]. IT HAS TO FIND YOU."*

— ANTHONY "SHAKE" SHAKIR

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No, but I like where this is going. Scratching it out with little money and more love, pushing the Detroit vibe by any means necessary to who knows where. But they'll know when they feel it, Aaron-Carl says.

"People need real soul music in their lives. They are hungry for it because they can't find the real thing anywhere else," he says. "It's something unique inside us we can share. And we do it through house music and funky techno. Take our emotions. It's a gift, from us to you."

Aaron-Carl says W.A.R.M.T.H. has already hit a nerve in Europe, where chapters are forming in the UK, France, Spain, and Sweden. The group has tentative plans to buy a building in Detroit for parties, talks, memorabilia.

"Our goal is to bring music back to where it belongs, back to people who have passion in their hearts for it," he says. "That's how it first happened in Detroit. People started with nothing but love, and look what we made out of it: something that keeps getting deeper and stronger—something we believe just never goes away. It's finding people all over again." ■

**Anthony "Shake" Shakir's *Frictionalism* 1994-2009 is out now on Rush Hour. Kyle Hall's "Kaychunk" is out now on Hyperdub. Aaron-Carl's "Your Club Went Hollywood" is out now on Wallshaker.**





AFTER YEARS TOILING IN RELATIVE OBSCURITY,  
US GARAGE PRODUCER **TODD EDWARDS** GETS HIS COME-UPPANCE.

# BORN AGAIN

WORDS TOM LEA PHOTOS SHAWN BRACKBILL

When New Jersey's Todd Edwards headlined London's club Fabric recently, it felt like a homecoming. Not because it's particularly rare for Edwards to play London, but because in recent years this Italian-American garage producer has seen his status rise from critical cult favorite to that of an established and accepted touchstone for the UK's frequently shifting underground dance scene. It wasn't lost on the crowd, nor the rest of the performers on the night—among them Shortstuff, Deadboy, and Hot City—that this well-timed booking showcased Edwards at the peak of his acclaim to a sea of admirers old and new.

But Edwards has always had a special place in his heart for London, as a new recent track, the stunning "No Place Like London," testifies. "I Made 'No Place Like London' to show my appreciation for the UK

and the love I have been shown for so many years," he says. "It's something that I never want to take for granted."

The famous irony with Todd Edwards is that despite being such an important figure in London music, he was born and bred in the United States. But fortunately, his long-overdue moment has come simultaneously on both sides of the ocean. "Todd Edwards has definitely influenced my production, as evident on 'Mind Reader,'" offers New York producer/DJ Kingdom. "There are sharp syncopated snares, deep bass, and chopped vocal samples strung into a melody, so the track is very much in his lineage. I love that his music is generally very well balanced. It's at once melody and poppy, and at the same time dark, swinging, and percussive."

London's Hot City is also quick to sing Edwards' praises: "Not only is [his music] a cut-up collage of sound—his structure is very good, too, using bridges, choruses, and verses in an instrumental dance track. I first heard Todd's 'Crazy Love' remix for MJ Cole, and didn't think it was that great, but then heard [his remix of Sounds of One's] 'As I Am' in a club and tracked it down, realized all his tunes were made that way, and started building my collection from the exchange. He still sounds original today."

In a 2007 interview with *Stylus*, one of the few in-depth Edwards interviews on the web, he refers to himself as "a suburbanite, [part of] a typical East Coast Italian family." The son of a carpet salesman, he started making music in 1992, trying to "emulate what was out there: Roger S, MK, Masters at Work, Todd Terry."

Edwards went on to develop an instantly recognizable style of his own. With a four-to-the-floor beat as the foundation, he chops vocals—sometimes sung himself, then pitch-shifted—down to the individual syllables to create unique melodies on top. It's dance music on the surface, but at its heart,

Edwards' music is a sincerely personal form of pop, with its own message (he's a devout Christian), and masterful adaptation of the traditional verse-chorus-bridge structure.

"Historically, I would have to say [my biggest influence] is Stevie Wonder," continues Edwards, who has also mentioned Björk and Enya as key influences in the past. "A close cousin of mine gave me Stevie Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life*. I listened to it religiously. If I was never given that album, I would have never composed 'Saved My Life.'" Edwards' last LP, *Odyssey*, featured an entire team of "guest vocalists," Edwards adopting a different alias for each one. It's a singular journey in the same vein as *Speak for Yourself*, the 2005 album by Imogen Heap—another vocalist Edwards admires, and has remixed to glistening effect in the past. "I spent a lot of hours in the studio," he reflects. "Just me, God, and the sampler."

Todd's original productions are only half the story. He's remixed countless acts in his time, including Daft Punk, Talking Heads, Justice, and ex-Spice Girl Mel B, chopping and cutting the tracks in his

trademark style. "He was the first name that came to mind when Fool's Gold asked me who I wanted to remix 'Mind Reader,'" says Kingdom. "There are very few significant American contributions to garage music, so I wanted to have him on it. I'm very happy with the results."

"The Todd-i-fication process is for songs that I really love that I want to fit into my DJ set," Edwards says of his remix style. "A lot of club tracks may not fit well with a set of Todd tracks [he only plays his own productions when he DJs]. The whole process is about adding a bit of myself to the original without overpowering it... to express what music moved me the most in past and present."

This is key. Todd Edwards' music may be driven by an individual journey, but it's one of tribute—to God, to family, to the music, and music fans who've inspired it. ■

"I SPENT A LOT OF HOURS IN THE STUDIO, JUST ME, GOD, AND THE SAMPLER."

#### EXTENDED MIX: FIVE MUST-HAVE TODD EDWARDS JAMS



##### Sound of One—"As I Am (Todd Edwards Remix)" (1993)

Edwards' music often has a snow-capped shimmer to it, but this is one of his more colorful outings, with twilight sax and diva vocals. He's very careful with his cut-up treatment here, retaining the original's feel.



##### Todd Edwards—"Saved My Life" (1995)

Famously samples his father's voice. And just listen to those snares.



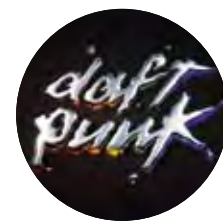
##### St. Germain—"Alabama Blues (Todd Edwards' Dub Mix)" (1995)

One of his very best remixes—the melodies here are something else. You could cut all traces of vocal from this and you'd still have something special.



##### Todd Edwards—"Shut the Door" (2000)

Far from subtle in its religious rhetoric, this has it all: ecstatic breaths bounce like rows of clouds pushed by piston snares, while a lead vocal tells you to let God into your life. So much detail in the production that it's exhausting to listen to.



##### Daft Punk—"Face to Face" (2001)

This is a simple masterpiece that Edwards co-produced and sang on, and one of the only songs where his vocals are mostly untouched. In his words, again from the *Stylus* interview, "If I were on my own, I'd be listening to all the flaws. That's the good thing about collaboration. It becomes a marriage of trust."



To hear these tracks, go to [XLR8R.com/132extras](http://XLR8R.com/132extras).

[myspace.com/toddedwards](http://myspace.com/toddedwards)





# NEW SPRING

PHOTOS [JULIA GALDO](#)  
STYLING [KRISTEN LUCIO](#) AND [JAK](#)



NUDE-TRANSFORMABLE BLAKE DRESS BY [LE SANG DES BÊTES](#), STARBURST DENIM VEST BY [DIVINE RIGHTS OF DENIM](#), BLACK FINGERLESS GLOVES BY [LA CRASIA](#), PURPLE TIGHTS BY [AMERICAN APPAREL](#), BLACK PATENT LEATHER OXFORDS BY [PORTS 1961](#)



YELLOW SILK PRINTED TOP BY SADO. DENIM ZIP-UP BANDEAU TOP BY DIVINE RIGHTS OF DENIM,  
DOWNBURST FLARED SHORT BY EVAN & DEAN. ROSE GOLD CUFF AND BANGLE BY ALEXIS BITTAR





YELLOW FLORAL BUSTIER DRESS BY AMI CLUBWEAR, BLUE PLAID REVERSE-SEAM BUTTON-DOWN BY STEVEN ALAN, BLACK JEWELLED FABRIC BRACELET BY ESPACIO FASHION





GOLD FRINGE CAIRO BUSTIER BY LAEKEN, ARAGON TRENCH COAT BY EVAN & DEAN, YELLOW LEGGINGS BY LE SANIG DES BETES, GOLD NECK PIECE BY ALEXIS BITAR, BLACK LEATHER GOLD-STUDED FRINGE BRACELET BY VITA



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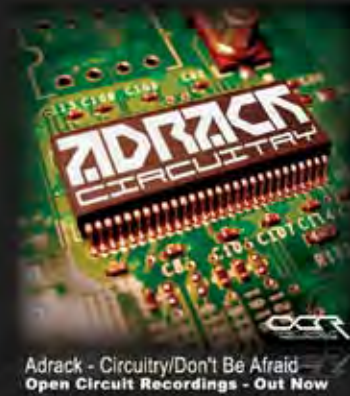
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TROPA - Love Songs and Alibis  
Outside Recordings LLC USA

## DEALING THE PUREST QUALITY ELECTRONIC MUSIC

# ALBUM REVIEWS

03/10



## HIGH PLACES

*High Places vs. Mankind*

Thrill Jockey

## JAVELIN

*No Más*

Luaka Bop

## LALI PUNA

*Our Inventions*

Morr Music



BEING AN ELECTRONIC POP ACT IS A LOT

HARDER THAN IT USED TO BE.

It wasn't that long ago that lo-fi electronic pop was all the rage with the indie set—remember when The Postal Service was blowing everyone's mind in 2003? Whether cobbled together by a lone soldier in his bedroom, or assembled with old synths, some spare instrumentation, and often sparser musical ability, the music was ostensibly indie pop, owing a lot more to C86 and twee than it did Detroit techno or Chicago house. Now that 2010 has rolled around, the indie pendulum continues to swing back and forth between laptop producers and more traditional guitar-based instrumentation, but the simple act of being a DIY electronic act is no longer revolutionary. As such, new albums from High Places and Javelin, not to mention genre veterans Lali Puna, have a tougher hill to climb than their counterparts of a decade prior.

German outfit Lali Puna has been conspicuously absent in recent years, last releasing an album in 2004 with *Faking the Books*. As part of the Morr Music roster, Lali Puna—with the help of like-minded acts Ms. John Soda, B. Fleischmann, and The Notwit—helped put a very particular brand of electronic music on the map in the early '00s, one marked by clean synths, minimal percussion, plenty of sonic white space, melodic vocals delivered in a nearly deadpan manner, and traditional pop songwriting. And while *Our Inventions* may have been six years in the making, very little has changed; it's telling that even when the band collaborates with Yellow Magic Orchestra's Yukihiro Takahashi on the exceedingly pleasant album closer, "Out There," the repeated refrain is "seems just like always." "Make no mistake, *Our Inventions* is a very nice album—"Rest Your Head" and "Everything is Always" are precious little slices of pop music—just don't expect kids who have been gorging on the psychedelic exploits of Animal Collective to flip out over this one.

Much more likely to capture their imagination is *No Más*, the debut album from sample-loving Brooklyn duo Javelin. Within the

first seconds of bouncy album opener "Vibrationz," it's clear that these boys are piloting a quirky, fun-filled journey through decades of oddball pop stylings. Whether it's helium-voiced 8-bit B-Boy hip-hop ("Oh! Centra"), spazzy, falsetto '80s electro ("On It on It"), glamorous synth disco with Beach Boys-esque vocal harmonies ("Moscow 1980"), or chopped-and-sliced piano funk ("Susie Cues"), *No Más* offers one lighthearted romp after the next. And while the album's unique collage of what seems like vintage sounds will prompt endless "is that a sample?" debates amongst crate diggers, the pure joy offered by just listening will hopefully reveal those arguments for what they are—beside the point.

Fellow Brooklynites High Places are far less likely to find such diplomacy in response to *High Places vs. Mankind*, their second full-length. Past efforts often came across as pastoral, with Mary Pearson's childlike vocals dancing above sparse, loop-based electronic soundscapes, and similar moments ("She's a Wild Horse," "Canada") do populate the new album. But some lo-fi purists will undoubtedly cry foul when they hear "The Longest Shadows" or "When It Comes," which bookend the album with slightly glossier production and an '80s goth-disco vibe that recalls Siouxsie and The Banshees or The Church. These tracks, along with "On Giving Up" and "Constant Winter," undeniably signal High Places' shift toward a more accessible sound, but they also happen to be some of the brightest spots on the album. More likely to please everyone is the ingenuous standout "On a Hill in a Bed on a Road in a House," which successfully balances the band's scrabbly beginnings with their desire to keep moving forward. And isn't that the point? The phrase "stagnation is death" may be a little strong, but change is certainly preferable to having your latest album referred to as "nice."  
*Shawn Reynaldo*



## AUTECHRE

### Oversteps

Warp

Even in their earliest form, Autechre tracks had a handmade feel, assembled from richly manipulated sounds rather than standardized electronic building blocks. *Oversteps* is the latest product of the duo's Max/MSP wizardry, and it recoups some of the coherence of their earlier, almost clubby songs with the more lateral processing and cryptic shapes of its predecessor, *Quaristice*. So while it's not surprising that the results cover broad stylistic territory, it feels strange at first to find Booth and Brown back in a coherent musical zone. "known(1)"'s processional synth harpsichord and plastic trumpet bleats even manage to cut a figure somehow close to late-era Coil. Other tracks—in the Autechre tradition—aren't comparable to anything except Autechre, but as "see on see" proves, structured chaos can have feelings, too. It's nice to find a little mystification from a duo that often prizes rigor over imagery. *Brandon Bussolini*

### AFRO-ROCK, VOL. 1

Strut

Among the many Afrobeat comps out there, Strut's reissue of Duncan Brooker's impeccably curated *Afro-Rock, Vol. 1*, originally issued on Kona in 2001, is especially welcome. It doesn't take a collector to appreciate the consistent, engaging quality of this disc, which lovingly showcases choice cuts of East African funk, soul, and jazz from the '60s and '70s. Particularly notable here are Orchestra Lissanga's "Okuzua," its guitars ringing with a delicate, delightful cadence, and the funky, infectious opening track, Ishmael Jingo's "Fever," an essential in this realm. This reissue tacks on another tune from Jingo, an untitled, entrancing slice of psych-soul that's definitely worth hearing, and the digital version features three additional songs. A great way to begin your obsession. *Michael Harkin*

### ELLEN ALLIEN

#### WATERGATE 05

Watergate

Ellen Allien and Berlin clubbing institution Watergate have had a long relationship, so it's disappointing that her entry in their mix series is such a dud. *Watergate 05* may begin in familiar territory—the icy, emotive techno of DJ Yellow and John Tejada have typically been her bread and butter—but soon we're thrown into everything from wobbly bass to bongo-laden micro-house to second-rate electro. The mixing is jarring, the pacing erratic. *Watergate 05* has its moments—a transition from Matias Aguayo's bizarre "Bo Jack" to Alexi Delano's "Molar One" is flawless, but it's a rare delight. In trying to honor a diverse set of sounds, Allien has failed to do any of them justice. *Ross Holland*

### CHICAGO UNDERGROUND DUO

#### BOCA NEGRA

Thrill Jockey

The post-rock family tree inevitably leads to the Chicago Underground collective. At the heart of that group are Rob Mazurek and Chad Taylor, who, despite their endless "rock" credits, are secretly an avant-garde free-jazz duo in the Ornette Coleman model. With *Boca Negra*, they pilot bare-bones drums, brass, and marimbas straight into the unorthodox tunings and slippery structures of Coleman's harmolodics, even covering his "Broken Shadows" to make the intent clear. *Boca Negra* can be discordant and difficult, with shifting time signatures and sparse instrumentation delaying nearly all gratification, but when "Conflition" locks together with a vicious swing to the rhythm, their unorthodoxy makes sense. *Rob Geary*

### DONWILL

#### DON CUSACK IN HIGH FIDELITY

Interdependent Media

The 2000 classic hipster film *High Fidelity* wasn't exactly hip-hop, but Donwill (of Tanya Morgan) channels his inner Rob Gordon to deal with his quarter-life crisis, addressing his relationship woes through a clever concept album. Using

the film's timeline, the MC creates a thoughtful and comical 16-track odyssey with *Don Cusack in High Fidelity*. He finds love on the soulful dedication "Laura's Song," runs down his "Top 5 Breakups" over a funky groove, and rebounds with the bouncy, synthesized electro-pop jam "Love Junkie." With equal doses of true-school hip-hop and R&B, Donwill fills out the cast with crisp production from Von Pea, Keelay & Zaire, and A-Plus, and vocal contributions from Opio, Peter Hadar, and Raegen Fykes, among others. *Zoneil Maharaj*

### DANTON EEPROM

#### YES IS MORE

Fondation

Working in the oft-arid realms of minimal techno and microhouse, French producer Danton Eeprom imbues them with a sly sensuality that coaxes maximum wigglyness from a sparse sound palette. For his debut album, Eeprom threads male and female vocals (his own and Au Revoir Simone's Erika Forster) into a varied sonic tapestry without abandoning the genres with which he's established his lofty rep. He's also brought a brighter and more colorful approach to his tracks, as beat-wise opener "Thanks for Nothing" makes clear. The deep downtempo funk of "Give Me Pain" and the quiet-storm R&B of "Desire No More" attempt to capture Prince's seductive powers, but epic minimal-techno rollers "Tight" and "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" remain Eeprom's forte. *Dave Segal*

### FREEWAY

#### THE STIMULUS PACKAGE

Rhymesayers

Though the economy is still a mess, we can rejoice in the fact that Freeway and Jake One's *The Stimulus Package* is here to rejuvenate hip-hop. The two display perfect chemistry with the Seattle beatsmith's bangers complimenting the Philly Freezer's gruff delivery. While the subject matter is sometimes stale—hustling ("One Foot In"), kicking street wisdom ("Know What I Mean"), personifying crack ("The Product")—Freeway's lyricism is sharp and Jake's production crisp. These are soulful compositions full of pounding drums, heavy bass, and chopped vocal samples. Former Roc-A-Fella foot soldier Freeway is in his true element, as tracks like "Microphone Killa" and "Throw Your Hands Up" make you wonder why he even bothered with Just Blaze and Kanye. *Zoneil Maharaj*

### GROWING

#### PUMPS

Vice

With new album *Pumps*, Brooklyn-based avant-electronic outfit Growing is the closest it's ever been to making straight-ahead club tracks. Since their last record, 2008's *All the Way*, they've expanded to a trio with new member Sadie Laska, also of IUD and Extreme Violence, who lends samples, electronics, and chopped-up vocals to these celestial jammers. The watery guitar parts of *All the Way* remain, rolled up into gritty, more linear drum-



## NICK CHACONA

### Love in the Middle

Moodmusic

Variety can either be an enhancement or disaster on full-length albums. In Nick Chacona's case, cohesion steers his debut, *Love In the Middle*, toward brilliance. Born wanderer, former *XLRR* scribe, and prolific producer, Chacona artfully unites house, reggae, disco, and cosmic dance modes. Right off the bat, opener "Especial" brings percussive disco beats, reverby keys, and steady, dub-inspired bass pathways together at a sunny intersection. Things head in an Italo direction with "Turning and Tossing" followed by "The Fear," a vocal number featuring the Sheffield's Kathy Diamond, whose Patrice Rushen-esque voice compliment the electro-soul jam. There are echoes of Chacona's eclectic house output on Hector Works on "Eskayelator" and "Autumn Pass," while mid-tempo gems like "Hipstar" evokes Mudd or Prins Thomas' hazy, shambolic output. Convincingly, *Love in the Middle* has found that sweet spot in the center of things. *Tomas Palermo*

machine rhythms that occasionally give way to the serene drone of Growing's earlier years. "Highlight" is precisely what its title suggests, infectious and unsettling, like Terry Riley's "A Rainbow in Curved Air" filtered through a grinding techno lens. Yet another intriguing permutation—is a party record next? *Michael Harkin*

### MATTHEW HAWTIN

#### ONCE AGAIN, AGAIN

Plus 8

Just in terms of its sheer volume, this mixed archive of chillout moods and grooves from the early- to mid-'90s is an essential audio document. One of the features of this release is a digital-only, three-hour-plus continuous mix that includes tracks by Peter Namlook, Sun Electric, MLO, Theorem, and FUSE. Matthew Hawtin, who often served as somnolent counterpoint to the body-buzzing menace and mania of brother Richie's main-room DJ sets, does a splendid job of blending together largely static material that had an almost instant expiration date upon its initial release, and whose main function was to calm and de-electrify a battered nervous system. *Walter Wasacz*

### JAGA JAZZIST

#### ONE-ARMED BANDIT

Ninja Tune

If Fela Kuti recruited a nine-person band with modern electronics, fiery guitars, and a full horn section in Norway, Afrobeat might sound like *One-Armed Bandit*. Like Charles Mingus' big bands, Jaga Jazzist relies on well-schooled players to navigate multilayered song structures that practically demand 3-D pop-up charts to write out, then charge through them with an interlocking, untrammeled joy that transforms a potentially chin-beardy mix of instrumental jazz and post-rock into something closer to a cerebral-yet-gutbucket funk. Perhaps it's something in the Oslo water—like fellow Norwegians Röyksopp, Jaga Jazzist transforms potentially icy sonics into warm, clever outbursts with apparent ease. *Rob Geary*

### SHARON JONES & THE DAP-KINGS

#### I LEARNED THE HARD WAY

Daptone

Just as Brooklyn soul-revival impresarios Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings' live show has progressed from raw funk to Stax-style revue, their recordings



have been a process of settling into the ensemble's talent. *I Learned the Hard Way* is easily the group's best effort yet, an album of classic songwriting and sharp musicianship belying its own complexity. From near-orchestral arrangements ("The Game Gets Old") to playful studio ease (recession anthem "Money"), this is a disc even Isaac Hayes would covet. But the star is undeniably Jones, who attains a rare level of confidence as she coos, belts, and soothes without cliché or crutch. Jones' voice is an instrument shaped by age, not youth, and *Hard Way* proves she's just hitting her stride. *Justin Hopper*

### NINCA LEECE

#### THERE IS NO ONE ELSE WHEN I LAY DOWN AND DREAM

Bureau B

For her debut solo album, Ninca Leece throws small organic touches (think: babbling child) and quirky glitches into a melodic dreamland that alternates between subtle Télépopmusik-era house and bouncy electro-pop. The playful French producer's vocals could easily go bitchy à la Miss Kittin, but tend to end up cheery and sweet, as exemplified by the infectious, funky-bass-inflected single "Sitting on Top of the World." Where Leece opts to croon in her native tongue ("The Beast"), her simple lyrics suddenly become mysterious and sensual. She makes a pretty but unexciting pass through familiar territory with a cover of The Cure's "Love Song" (she should have done it in French!), but provides a compelling mess of her own texture on "Aseptique." *Lulu McAllister*

### LIARS

#### SISTERWORLD

Mute

Maybe it's the two members with art-school backgrounds, but Liars have a knack for taking clichés to sublime places. Considering that the distance between their first album—the apex of dance-punk that might also be a joke at its expense—and the post-grunge miniature songcraft of 2007's *Liars* seems smaller than some would have you believe, it makes sense that *Sisterworld* sounds like more of a conceptual wager than a stylistic one. *Sisterworld* maintains *Liars'* sonic trappings but apparently deals with subcultural scenes as a means of maintaining identity in a city like LA. It's hard to see the forest for the trees when Angus Andrew is singing lines like "Why'd you kill the bear with the gun?," but for a band whose brilliance comes couched in stupidity, it's on point. *Brandon Bussolini*

### MADLIB WITH GUILTY SIMPSON

#### MADLIB'S MEDICINE SHOW VOL. 1 - BEFORE THE VERDICT

Stones Throw

Just when you thought Madlib could get no more bugged-out, along comes the first installment of his monthly *Medicine Show* series, a 17-track prequel to the upcoming *OJ Simpson* album with Guilty Simpson (no relation). Tracks like "Ode to the Ghetto," "Lucky Guy," and "Pigs" offer grimey underground hip-hop at its dusted, blunted, and drunken best—hinting at likely instant classic-status for the proper album. Guilty's hood-savvy, self-assured flow has never sounded iller, and it's a strong counterbalance to Madlib's ADD-added production—crazy bells, sampled police radios, soul breaks, and ominous tones are everywhere. For true Madlib believers, *Before the Verdict* is akin to Miles Davis releasing a mixtape called *Sort of Blue*. *Eric K. Arnold*

### MARTYN

#### FABRIC 50

Fabric

In the age of the ubiquitous, manicured Ableton mix, it's no wonder so much attention has been paid to Martyn's decision to mix *Fabric 50* live. But to focus solely on this mix's raw, seat-of-your-pants style is to miss the mark. *Fabric 50* not only offers a glimpse



## NOCANDO

### *Jimmy the Lock*

#### Alpha Pup

When it comes to Los Angeles' music scene, there's no avoiding the heralded cipher circle Project Blowed and beat-head bastion Low End Theory. Nocando's debut, *Jimmy the Lock*, lives in both worlds. With a fully automatic delivery full of wig-splitting wordplay, the battle-tested Blowedian fires inventive, idiosyncratic, and unpredictable rhymes. Topics range from navigating LA life on "Exploits and Glitches" to sex with minors on the R. Kelly homage "Skankophelia" to the pains of love on "Flight Risk," where he ends up in his bathroom masturbating to a picture of his girlfriend with a gun in his hand. Clearly, he's much more than just a battle rapper, and LA's finest help accentuate this point, as Jimmy the Lock features abstract, blunted bangers full of warbly synths, dynamic drums, and guttural, pounding bass by Nosaj Thing, Nobody, Daedelus, Free the Robots, Thavius Beck, and more. *Zoneil Maharaj*

into the sounds that influenced Martyn's superb *Great Lengths*, but it also stands as a testament to the contemporary amalgamation of dubstep, bass, and techno. From Zomby's rave-ups to Ben Klock's icy Berghain techno to the swing and shuffle of 2562, Kode9, Joy Orbison, and, of course, Martyn himself, *Fabric 50* is a perpetually electrifying, if not always polished, exemplification of just how splintered and versatile the world of dubstep has become. *Ross Holland*

#### MI AMI

##### STEAL YOUR FACE

*Thrill Jockey*

If the age-old adage is applicable here, *Steal Your Face* is the storm following the calm of Mi Ami's debut, *Watersports*. "Harmonics (Genius of Love)" opens the SF band's sophomore effort using all of their sonic elements at once: reverb-aded vocals, dubby basslines, distorted guitar work, and propulsive drumming. The energetic, noisy dance-punk trend continues throughout *Steal Your Face*, particularly well on the no-wave-inspired "Latin Lover" and "Secrets," so much that you may catch yourself thinking you've stumbled upon a new Black Eyes record. Mi Ami continues to explore its loose-groove, jam-band tendencies on the epic "Dreamers" and album closer "Slow," but in far more reserved quantities than *Watersports*, making for a much more exciting and immediately lovable listen. *Patric Fallon*

#### MUX MOOL

##### SKULLTASTE

*Ghostly International*

If one used producer Brian Lindgren's debut album as the basis for psychoanalysis, it would be almost immediately apparent that under his musical moniker, Mux Mool, the man suffers from multiple personality disorder. The tug-of-war between Dilla-esque hip-hop ("Hog Knuckles") and buzzy, electro-tinged dance tunes ("Crackers") runs throughout the whole of *Skulltaste*. Occasionally, on tracks like "Breakfast Enthusiast" and "Death 9000," the two opposing psyches combine in a seamless marriage of new sounds, though that's not to say they are the only ideas present on Mux Mool's debut. R&B, disco, and orchestral arrangements also color in Lindgren's smooth edges, and help make a fresh-sounding record that could please many tastes; just don't expect him to stick to one style for too long. *Patric Fallon*

#### POP AMBIENT 2010

*Kompakt*

Even though it's a decade old, Kompakt's ambient franchise still manages to sound fresh, avoiding a tragic shift towards becoming hipster spa music or a *Pure Moods* for the techno set. While the template and talent has varied, the key is making sure that pop remains an important part of the equation. A melancholy-yet-romantic vibe stains the playful melodies and atmospheric bliss of this year's installment, whether it's the wispy, mandolin-like notes of Wolfgang Voigt's "Zither Und Horn," BVDUB's



17-minute closing track, or Triola's "Schildergasse," the sound of an M83 crescendo on valium. Much like "The Sound of One Lip Kissing" by Marsen Jules, where clusters of notes gracefully collide and decay in time, each song is filled with sweet harmonies and slow-motion swells. *Patrick Sisson*

#### ANTHONY "SHAKE" SHAKIR

##### FRICTIONALISM 1994-2009

*Rush Hour*

Real Detroit techno heads have long been repping Anthony "Shake" Shakir's work, but only a few outside of that small scene have given him his proper due, if only because his profile's rise has been restrained by health issues and limited-run releases. A rhythm master in the truest sense of the phrase, his many skills are displayed here: There's the jacked electro-funk of "The Floor Filler," the dusty Dilla-like beats of "Detroit State of Mind," and the dubby techno hypnotics of "Perseverance." Paired with tracks like "Assimilated," a hissy predecessor to today's UK funky, or "Arise," which incorporates what might be the best Steely Dan sample in dance music history, *Frictionalism* guarantees that Shakir's amazing work will never be overlooked again. *Thomas Rees*

#### RICHARD SKELTON

##### LANDINGS

*Type*

On his second album under his own name, Richard Skelton creates mournful music that is directly informed by the landscape, specifically the moorlands of Anglezarke (in Lancashire, UK), but which is also elegiac to his late wife, Louise. Though site-specific pieces (in the ruins of old farmhouses and so on) were later abandoned in favor of recordings inspired by the location, *Landings* is still partially derived from Anglezarke. Skelton collected small stones, bark, and other ephemera from the environment that he would later use as sound sources or plectra. *Landings* entered the public domain as an online diary (of the recording process), but very much remains the sound of private ritual, loaded with personal significances. It is a privilege to hear. *David Hemingway*



## SCUBA

### *Triangulation*

#### Hotflush

Among the myriad skills Paul Rose (a.k.a. Scuba) possesses is putting his projects in a right, tight context before the music even begins. *Triangulation*, his second album of original productions, is a largely seamless distillation of regional dance vibes found in the Berlin, Detroit, and London power centers. If it were mere formula, or history lesson, it would have less impact. But Scuba's magic is in turning established musical styles into something organic and fresh, like dark ambient dubs ("Latch" and "Lights Out") that recall Basic Channel sides—but not quite. The same can be said for Motor City house and techno inspiration on "Before" and "You Got Me." Pitched-down UK rave influences are apparent throughout, notably on the soulful "So You Think You're Special" and "Three Sided Shape." But like everything else on this remarkable LP, the most significant "place" being mined is the artist's own fertile imagination. *Walter Wasacz*

#### STRICTLY RHYTHM EST. 1989. 20 YEARS. REMIXED.

*Strictly Rhythm*

It's hard to believe that classic American house music is nearing 30 years old, even as the music continues to mutate and endure on dancefloors around the globe. Twenty years in, Strictly Rhythm has come to be synonymous with the genre. *20 Years. Remixed.* stuffs two discs with the label's most iconic tracks from big names like Ultra Nate, Armand Van Helden, and Barbara Tucker, leaving new twists to a younger generation of remixers. Hot young names like Henrik Schwarz and Jesse Rose know their mission: tweak, update, and modernize, adding a glossy tech-house sheen, even to tracks as potentially campy as Reel 2 Real's "I Like to Move It." *Rob Geary*

#### SUGAR & GOLD

##### GET WET!

*Antenna Farm*

San Francisco's Sugar & Gold has always been about crafting fun, sexy dance music with a genderless quality, a combination tailor-made for the queerest metropolitan area in the United States. But while the group's sophomore record has some undeniably grooving moments, these are offset by the fact that the group often uses the same sonic palette to guide every piece. A track like "Couvade" is full of lovely hooks, synth flourishes, and sexy vocal posturing, but it is followed by "Salty Seraphim," which utilizes many of the same synth sounds in different places in the mix. Thus, while pieces like the disco-housey "Stay Soft" and "Feels Like Fire" are begging to be played in the club, there are moments of boredom on *Get Wet!* that are difficult to get past. *Thomas Rees*

#### THESE NEW PURITANS

##### HIDDEN

*Domino*

These New Puritans were tossed into the "art rock" genre following their 2008 debut, but that might have been a pre-emptive classification. *Hidden*, the quartet's second LP, is packed with references both obscure and banal, skittering between sparse post-punk and anthemic industrial sounds. Frontman/co-producer Jack Barnett geeked out on the Foley during the recording process, eventually including *taiko* drums, a wind ensemble, and the sound of biscuit-covered melons being smashed as musical elements. "We Want

War," the album's epic second track, incorporates ominous gypsy harmonium riffs that crescendo into a gloriously crashing juggernaut that hints at both Wire and Trent Reznor, while other tracks juxtapose menacing minimal percussion with disarmingly delicate toybox melodies. Call it whatever you want—Barnett and his bandmates are just getting started with their musical experiments. *Connie Hwang*

#### THE SEVEN FIELDS OF APHELION

##### PERIPHERY

*Graveface*

Apart from making music, Black Mother Super Rainbow member The Seven Fields of Aphelion takes photographs layering images of stark, abandoned commercial-industrial landscapes with more pastoral scenes of leaves and fields of wheat, a juxtaposition that provides a nice frame for listening to *Periphery*. This stellar debut album features ambient synth drones, hypnotically simple melodies, and an all-consuming echo that recalls empty spaces as much as wide-open nature. Additionally, there is a wistfulness expressed in tracks like "Grown," which opens with piano lines on top of drones and builds to a swirl of piano-synth harmonies that ache in their beauty. Other highlights include the bright dustiness of tracks like "Mountain Mary" and the watery arpeggiations of "Saturation: Arrhythmia." *Thomas Rees*

#### PRINS THOMAS

##### PRINS THOMAS

*Full Pupp*

It's hard to say what's more surprising; that veteran Norwegian producer Prins Thomas is only now releasing his debut full-length album, or that his first long-player sounds so much like vintage Krautrock. Thomas is well established as one of the kings of space disco, but he's largely eschewed the dancefloor here, instead offering druggy motorik beats, analog synths, and shimmering guitars that waft and linger over each lengthy number. "Ørkenvandring" and "Sauerkraut" are wonderful Neu!-esque ruminations, "Slangemusikk" is a slithering, psychedelic quest, "Nattønsket" features joyous vocal melodies, and "Wendy Not Walter" adds just a touch of glamor. Deliberate but never boring, *Prins Thomas* shows an artist in top form, one who's loosened his creative necktie without losing his way. *Shawn Reynaldo*

#### SETH TROXLER

##### BOOGBYTES VOLUME 05

*BPitch Control*

Seth Troxler's recent surge in popularity may have more to do with his gift for delivering the perfect sound bite than delivering consistently strong tracks, but one thing's for certain—the young Berlin-based expat knows how to craft a mix. Troxler's past podcasts for The Bunker and Save the Cannibals are first-rate efforts in low-slung, slinky house. *Boogybytes Volume 05*, on the other hand, paints in broader strokes. From jazzy deep house to skittish minimal techno, uplift to melancholy, the mix's arc across genres and moods is impressive, and tracks from Baeka, Birds and Souls, and Kiki are downright superb, but the mix never really hits its stride. *Boogybytes Volume 05* may not be Troxler's best, but it's certainly worth a listen. *Ross Holland*

#### YELLOW SWANS

##### GOING PLACES

*Type*

As the last testament from the format-catholic PDX noise duo, the fittingly titled *Going Places* crystallizes the tension that made for Yellow Swans' sporadic genius and, one assumes, their unraveling. Like Gowns, another foiled and convincing noise band, Yellow Swans' music is political in the most bummed and personal way. "Opt Out," "Limited Space," and "New Life" are titles of some of the dark-hued, percolating dust clouds contained on the record. As the names suggest, they ache with an awareness of being zipped into a historical moment where even micro-spaces of freedom from capitalism are compromised. *Going Places* has the feel of a ghost bearing down on you, and the only comfort it offers lies in the fact that it feels a lot like being alive right now. *Brandon Bussolini*

#### GO

Check out thousands more reviews at [XLR8R.com/reviews](http://XLR8R.com/reviews), including new albums from Kasper Bjorke, Buraka Som Sistema, James Pants, Lone, SubtractiveLAD, Tetine, Trans Am, White Hills, and Josiah Wolf.



BUBBLIN'



HOUSE OF HOUSE

New York, NY

The list of Big Apple DJs and producers striving to recapture the spirit of "classic" house stretches a mile long, but when Liv Spencer (who is also part of DFA project Still Going) and Saheer Umar came together as House of House and dropped the "Rushing to Paradise" single in early 2009, they nailed it. Their stripped-down, soulful piano-house epic quickly became one of those impossible-to-find pieces of vinyl, a problem only recently resolved by the track's reissue, which also includes a new remix by the legendary DJ Harvey. The follow-up single is in the works, as are who-would-have-thunk-it remixes for Crookers and Robbie Williams.

[myspace.com/houseofhouse](http://myspace.com/houseofhouse)



GUEST REVIEWS: BEN UFO



It should never be said that Ben UFO (a.k.a. Ben Thompson) isn't an extremely busy man. Between running the Hessle Audio label with co-founders and Leeds University pals Pangaea and Ramadanman since 2007, starting his new bi-weekly radio show on Rinse.FM, and holding down the Hessle residency at Fabric, Ben has become one of a handful of go-to figures for anyone hungry to know what's up in the UK's ever-changing, bass-centric, still-hasn't-been-properly-named, post-dubstep, post-garage music scene. We caught Ben in the midst of unleashing Hessle's latest releases from Pangaea and James Blake, and he offered to tell us about a few of his latest favorites. [myspace.com/freshben](http://myspace.com/freshben)

KYLE HALL  
"KAYCHUNK/YOU KNOW WHAT I FEEL"

*Hyperdub*  
Having remixed Darkstar's superb single "Aidy's Girl Is a Computer," it should come as no surprise that Kyle Hall has been given a 12" on Kode 9's label. What is unexpected is that rather than interpret Detroit house through a hip-hop filter, this release actively references London scenes. An essential release for any fans of broken, soulful dance music.

FLOATING POINTS  
"PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL"

*Eglo*  
Floating Points has had quite a year. Eglo, an imprint he runs with Rinse.FM's Alex Nut, has become one of the most talked-about labels around, while the live ensemble he coordinates recently won Gilles Peterson's Worldwide Award for best live performance. So it's with

no shortage of hype that they deliver "People's Potential," a slow-burning, continually building acid-disco groove. Listen in the dark on repeat, between the hours of 3 and 5 a.m.

ADDISON GROOVE  
"FOOTCRAB/DUMB SHIT"

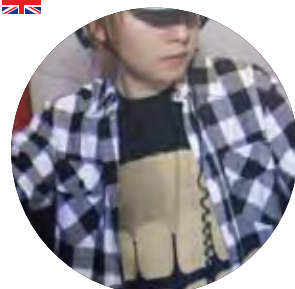
*Swamp 81*  
Loefah's label Swamp 81 has up until now specialized in the kind of bleak, uncompromising half-step you would expect based on his back catalog. This release marks a change of direction and a change of pace, looking out of London and toward the US for inspiration. Both of these tracks are driven by propulsive, shuffling 808 patterns and vocal cut-ups; a 140bpm interpretation of juke designed for club soundsystems.



JUJU & JORDASH  
Amsterdam, NL

Jazz heads and house fiends rarely run in the same circles, but Juju & Jordash (a.k.a. Gal Aner and Jordan Czamanski) just might get the two groups to see eye to eye. The duo met while both men were living in Haifa, Israel and playing in a variety of post-rock, jazz, and experimental groups, but in 2003 they relocated to Amsterdam, where they began producing house music in earnest. 2009's self-titled album is their most recent offering, and with its spaced-out, vaguely psychedelic sound and predilection toward improvisation, Juju & Jordash proved that straight-up house music doesn't have to be retro or a total snore.

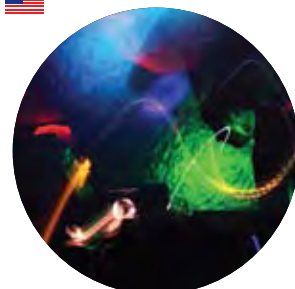
[jujujordash.com](http://jujujordash.com)



JULIO BASHMORE  
Bristol, UK

Bristol has never been known as a house town, as drum & bass and dubstep have long ruled the city's dancefloors, but 21-year-old Julio Bashmore (a.k.a. Matt Walker) just might change all that. Last year's "Um Bongo's Revenge" shows traces of Walker's jungle- and bass-laden upbringing, but the sound is undeniably house, which is perhaps why his self-titled EP on Dirtybird is the first UK funky release to find a home on a "proper" house label. His song "The Moth" was a highlight of Fabric's impeccable *Elevator Music Vol. 1* compilation, and another new release is slated on Soul Motive in the months ahead.

[myspace.com/juliobashmore](http://myspace.com/juliobashmore)



TEENGIRL FANTASY  
Oberlin, OH

It might seem like Teengirl Fantasy is playing at every amazing warehouse party in Brooklyn these days, but the band actually spends much of its time at Oberlin, where members Logan Takahashi and Nick Weiss are still in school. When they're not studying, the duo crafts a fuzzy brand of lo-fi electronic dance music that references shoegaze, classic Nintendo, rave divas, and washy '80s synths. To date, only a few Teengirl Fantasy singles have been released, but a debut album for True Panther Merok is on the way, along with remixes for Lemonade and HEALTH and a collaborative 12" with fellow Oberliners Blondes.

[myspace.com/teengirlfantasy](http://myspace.com/teengirlfantasy)



TURBO SONIDERO  
FUTURISTICO  
San Jose, CA

What do you know about tumbia? That's what Roman Zepeda playfully calls his take on *cumbia*, which he heard plenty of while growing up in both East San Jose and Puebla, Mexico. After the video for DJ Shadow's "Midnight in a Perfect World" inspired him to shed his teen punk aspirations and buy turntables, he began making beats and messing with downtempo, hip-hop, IDM, and even *baile* funk before repeated trips to SF's monthly Tormenta Tropical parties prompted him to get his *cumbia* on. Last year's debut EP, *Turbo+Cumbia=Tumbia*, is not to be missed, especially its flip of DJ Shadow's "Organ Donor."

[myspace.com/turbosoniderofuturistico](http://myspace.com/turbosoniderofuturistico)



ELUVIUM  
SIMILES CD



MONO  
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THE BLACK HEART  
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## IN THE STUDIO: DAPTONE RECORDS

BURGLARIES AND ANALOG FETISHISM: LEARNING THE HARD WAY WITH NEW YORK'S DAPTONE STUDIO-LABEL.

Brooklyn's Daptone label has kept the fires of '60s-blessed soul and funk burning for nearly a decade. Key to the Daptone sound is their dedication to analog tape, refusing to use computers to this day—a quality heard well on records by the Sugarman 3, The Budos Band, and the latest Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings album, *I Learned the Hard Way*. Last year, when the Daptone studio was burglarized, fans across the world came to its aid and donated a ton of gear. *XLR8R* spoke with Daptone label co-owner and studio engineer Gabriel "Bosco Mann" Roth about what was lost, and what matters most.

### **XLR8R: WHAT'S THE VIRTUE OF RECORDING AND MIXING ON ANALOG TAPE IN THE DIGITAL AGE?**

Gabriel Roth: I think the biggest advantage for me to recording on an eight-track analog machine as opposed to a computer is that it forces you to make a different kind of record and to approach the record in a much different kind of way... In some ways, it's harder, but in other ways, if I didn't record the record that way, I'd probably be still mixing it. There are people nowadays who have 40 different tracks and they sit around for months and months, and... they're [still] trying to figure out what the record is, and piece it together. Some people are intimidated by the [analog] process, but there's really no reason to be afraid. It's just a record; it's not heart surgery.

### **WHEN IT COMES TO CAPTURING THE VINTAGE, '60S SOUL SOUND, WHAT'S THE SPICE THAT YOU PUT IN THE MIXES? IT SEEMS TO BE REVERB.**

I'll definitely throw some reverb on something. In the studio here, we've got some spring reverbs and a plate reverb in the basement that we use. On the *Hard Way* record, I used a lot of tape delay. There are a couple of songs, like "Money," where I really used it as an effect. We built a drumset out of a tape delay, we also had a lot of weird echoes on the vocals. There are other real organic, natural songs like "If You Call," where I just wanted to create a bigger space and make it sound like the room was bigger than the little room we've got here... There are definitely a lot of little things like that we do to try to draw a vibe on our recordings. But really, I can't stress enough, that the biggest thing to make the sound on the recordings is always the musicians: what they play and how they play it.

### **FOR THOSE WHO ARE DYING TO USE VINTAGE ANALOG STUDIO GEAR, WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO FIND IT?**

The first thing is that there's an illusion that we have a lot of vintage equipment here. There's a lot of stuff we're using from the '80s; there's a lot of cheap stuff. We're using Shure SM57 microphones. The only equipment you need is your ears. [Studio producer] Willie Mitchell told me, "All you need are your ears and your heart." If you have a lot of extra money and nothing to do, great, but if you don't have a lot of money, pay some musicians before you start buying fancy equipment. The whole vintage equipment thing is mostly fetishism. I don't think there is anything magical about tape or tubes or any of that stuff that people get so freaked out about, especially engineers... I think it's the arrangement and the musicians, and as far as engineering, it's just your ears. It's where you put the microphone, it's how you record stuff. The equipment has very little to do with it. If you put up five different microphones, they're going to sound different and one might sound amazing but the point is that microphone might be a beautiful Neumann U47 tube microphone that costs \$8,000 and it might be a \$20 Radio Shack microphone. The problem is that instead of people listening to both of them and deciding which ones sound better—no offense, but unfortunately they're reading magazine articles and deciding, "I need to get one of these, I need to get one of those." That's just a stupid approach.

### **DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR STUDIO ENGINEERS ON SECURITY, GIVEN THE BURGLARY YOUR STUDIO?**

Insurance and an alarm for your studio are pretty cheap. People have told me the same thing for years before we had anything like that happen. I never gave it a second thought. We're in a not-very-secure neighborhood; let me put it that way... If you look around a little bit, it doesn't cost much to insure a studio, and definitely have good locks and a security system.

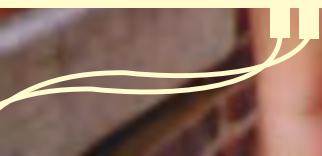
Visit [XLR8R.com/132extras](http://XLR8R.com/132extras) to see Daptone Studios' complete gear list.

Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings' *I Learned the Hard Way* is out now on Daptone. [daptonerecords.com](http://daptonerecords.com)

## ARTIST TIPS: XIU XIU

Jamie Stewart, the mastermind behind veteran indie band Xiu Xiu, has been using wonky electronics to create his sinisterly playful and completely abrasive sounds since his first album, 2002's *Knife Play*. Moving deeper into the 21st century, Stewart continues to employ new approaches in creating the electronic elements that color his fractured pop tunes, including the Korg DS-10 software for the Nintendo DS, modeled after Korg's classic MS-10 synth. Here Stewart gives us the lowdown on the DS-10's moving parts, and explains how Xiu Xiu's touchpad compositions came to life on *Dear God, I Hate Myself*, the band's newest record for Kill Rock Stars. *Patric Fallon*

[xiuxiu.org](http://xiuxiu.org)



### 1. DRUM MACHINE

On the DS-10, there are four drum sounds and four drum tracks, which can be step-written or tap-written with four little "pads" on the screen. The step-writing has the wonderful feature of being divided into seven octaves, so your kick sound can go anywhere from sub-bass to tiny clicks. As well, you can use a virtual knob-style interface to create analog drum sounds from scratch. Never having had the money for a real analog drum machine, this opened my ears to that world in a new way. The Congotronics-style melodic bass drum on "Apple for a Brain" was a product of this interface.

### 2. SYNTHS

There are two mono synths and two sequencers. Like the drum machine, the synths can be step-written or played on a touchscreen keyboard, and also have seven octaves. The touchscreen is a little tough to play because it is so small, but it is useful to work out parts or try harmonies with a previously programmed line. You can program the sounds for both synths in the same way as the drums, with virtual knob controllers over all the basic parameters. There is also, like the Korg, a patch-bay screen to manipulate pitch and the filter against square, saw, and triangle waves.

### 3. SEQUENCER

On the song "Secret Motel," which I wrote on trains during a European tour using only the DS-10, I used the sequencers for incredibly fast and intertwining lines going bonkers all up and down multiple octaves with zim-zam death-cute sounds.

### 4. EFFECTS

You can apply chorus, flanger, and a good-sounding delay to each drum sound individually, further enhancing your creativity. (It makes for fantastic Martin Hannett-style permutations.) On Roland drum boxes I have used, you couldn't put individual effects on a single drum sound. For "Dear God, I Hate Myself," being able to do this made the drums, which are the main part of the song, feel much more

freaked out and odd. These are not as incredible as the programming, but they can add a finishing touch to a sound.

### 5. KAOSS PAD

The two Kaoss Pads are touchscreens that can, depending upon where you place the stylus on an X/Y axis, control two different parameters of a sound. You can sweep across the screen and turn up the distortion while turning up the release on the EG filter. You can then record this move in real time in the sequencer. The "knobs" will then continue to change the sound as you played it with the beat.

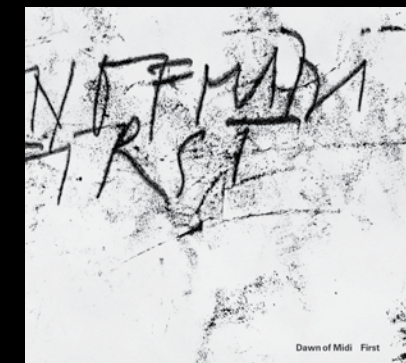


Watch video of Xiu Xiu in the studio at [XLR8R.com/132extras](http://XLR8R.com/132extras).



# DOM Dawn of Midi First

"Improvisationally gifted musicians with chemistry — the cats can play." *Mark Dresser*



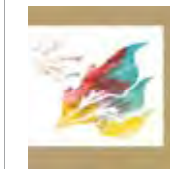
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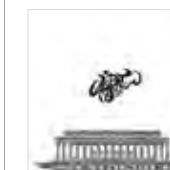
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Toro Y Moi (a.k.a. Columbia, South Carolina's Chaz Bundick) gathers up the best musical elements from around the globe R&B, Indie Rock, Electronic Dance and Psychedelica — and spins them round and round.  
*Out now on Carpark*



**Animal Collective** *Campfire Songs* CD/digital  
Paw Tracks is proud to present the reissue of Animal Collective's 2003 album, an escape from the clutter and electronic assault of the group's previous records.  
*Out now on Paw Tracks*



**Excepter** *Presidence* 2xCD/digital  
Over the course of more than two hours, *Presidence* spans the full spectrum of the Excepter sound, from street-level electro to cosmic synth infinity and beyond.  
*Out now on Paw Tracks*

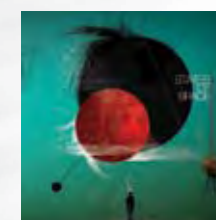


**The Method Actors** *This Is Still It* CD/digital  
The Method Actors were among the earliest bands to emerge from the Athens scene that produced The B-52s, R.E.M., Pylon, etc. *This Is Still It* — which R.E.M.'s Peter Buck describes as "a kind of secret history of the Athens scene" — revisits the early years of the legendary duo.  
*Out March on Acute*

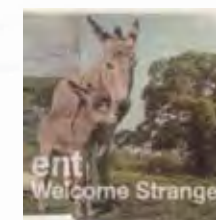
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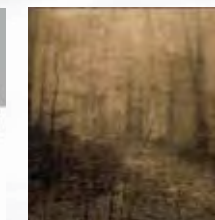
another electronic musician  
states of space  
cd/digital



ent  
welcome stranger  
cd/digital



subtractiveLAD  
life at the end of the world  
cd/digital



bitcrush  
of embers  
cd/digital



ruxpin  
where do we float from here?  
cd/digital



near the parenthesis  
music for the forest concourse  
cd/digital

## FINAL FANTASY XIII

(SQUARE ENIX; PS3, XBOX 360)



As the first core *Final Fantasy* game to surface in nearly four years, and the first on the PS3 and Xbox 360, *Final Fantasy XIII*'s anticipation among RPG heads is at a fever pitch. And it does not disappoint. Following the series' proclivity for creating stories in which magic and technology not only coexist but often work in tandem, *FFXIII* contains more characters, plot twists, and high-minded storytelling than a Tolstoy tome. Visually, *FFXIII* never fails to impress as every bit of the six years it took to make is evident on screen. *FFXIII* places players in the dangerous world of Pulse, above which a floating utopia known as Cocoon has separated itself from the threats below. Of course, things don't always go as planned for the folks of Cocoon, and the two worlds soon become intertwined once again. Initially taking on the role of Lightning, a young female soldier in Cocoon's military, you soon join up with a motley crew of adventurers to ensure harmony between the two worlds. Well worth the long wait. *Ryan Rayhill*

### COMPANY TIME



Perhaps there should be an addendum to the old adage "nothing is certain in life but death and taxes" that reads "...and first-person shooters" as **Battlefield: Bad Company 2** (EA; PS3, Xbox 360) proves that people may never get sick of virtual firefights with their buddies. Billed as a "Modern Warfare-killer," *Bad Company 2* takes *Call of Duty* head-on with realistic visuals, ear-pleasing/splitting sound design, and, with dedicated servers, online play that even *CoD* can't match in terms of speed and availability. From the

### NOTHIN' BUT A BEAT THANG



#### Beat Thang Virtual

MSRP: \$149; [beatkangz.com](http://beatkangz.com)

Beat Kang Electronics brings its portable sampler/drum-machine/production tool, Beat Thang, into your Mac or PC with Beat Thang Virtual. The main selling point on this program is its overall simplicity, as Beat Thang promises novice producers they can create loads of professional-sounding tunes fast and easy. Seeing as how the software comes with 3,000 sounds, an instrument creator kit, built-in mastering gear, and a straightforward, easy-to-use visual interface, among many other features, Beat Thang Virtual just may be the next *GarageBand* for budding beatmakers. Now all you need are some virtual ideas! *Patric Fallon*

rocky, snow-covered crags of the Russian border to the malaria-filled jungles of South America, your team hunts enemies amid chaotic firefights and destructible environments in a way few titles have been able to capture. With the inclusion of vehicles like Black Hawk helicopters, ATVs, and patrol boats at your command, *Bad Company 2* could very well claim *Modern Warfare 2*'s throne as the king of online shooters. *RR*

## NATIVE INSTRUMENTS TRAKTOR KONTROL X1

(MSRP: \$199; [NATIVE-INSTRUMENTS.COM](http://native-instruments.com))



Previewed online in November 2009, this slender panel of rubberized knobs and LED-backlit buttons revealed Native Instruments' New Year's resolutions in more ways than one. The Traktor Kontrol X1 shows its German parent company finally resolute in offering, well, native hardware support for its premier digital-DJ software. Plus, the USB-tethered unit operates on proprietary NHL high-resolution protocols to rival MIDI in precision of bi-directional response with visual feedback. Coupled to Traktor Scratch Pro 1.2.4, this plug-and-play, hot-swappable dual-deck controller instantly maps to intuitive track selection, cue assignments, and filter-triggering settings.

The northernmost potentiometers offer customizable mid-points for comfortably adjusting multiple parameters of dual FX channels (activated as three pre-chained effects or a single one selected from the banks by a

tab-forward function). In the mid-section, two firm push encoders scroll smoothly through tracks to assign the A/B channels. And the lower two knobs plus 16 buttons access/edit loop and transport functions. The shift button expands each button's functionality—to toggle multiple cues, beat/pitch effects, etc.—and a second assignable MIDI layer exists for the preset-phobic.

Ultimately, the X1 best suits gear-augmented live remix artists (the kind likely to already have NI's Maschine, M-Audio's Trigger Finger, some Allen & Heath, etc.). It's not a complete solution, as there's no mixer, EQ, or actual audio interface (though knowing Native's style of integrated suites, it's likely more custom boxes will follow). But the X1 does offer a stable, seamless extension for tweaking Traktor, coaxing traditional in-the-out DJs further out into a more active element. *Tony Ware*

### TOUCHDOWN RETURNS



As wacked-out a plot as you are likely to come across, even by videogame standards, **No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle** (Ubisoft; Wii) ups both the awesome and weirdness quotients this month as you take the reins of a once top-ranked assassin named Travis Touchdown. Travis' numbers have slipped as of late, forcing you to work your way back up the list by offing the competition—including a teenage girl with a crush on you and a boombox-wielding thug who uses women as projectile weapons—with a combo of lightsabers and pro-wrestling moves. Impressively out there. *RR*

### MONSTER MIC



#### Blue Microphones Yeti USB Mic

MSRP: \$149.99; [bluemic.com](http://bluemic.com)

If the art of recording sits just outside your range of concern or abilities (but doesn't weaken your desire for good quality), the Yeti could be your new best friend. Wires are minimal, as it connects to your computer and is powered via USB. It looks and feels like something off *The Tonight Show* podium, and is capable of bludgeoning a man much larger than yourself. It uses a three-capsule design (versus the two included on Blue's own Snowball, or the one on many other mics), and offers four modes: omnidirectional, cardioid, stereo, and omnidirectional. It is not at all portable, and the knobs are made of chintzy plastic. If these two aspects do not pose a problem, however, sound quality is some of the best-in-class, and THX certification means you're rather unlikely to get a lemon. *Evan Shamoon*

## HEAVY RAIN

(SONY, PS3)



With perhaps some of the darkest, headiest material of any title in recent memory, including rape, suicide, and murder most foul, *Heavy Rain* isn't so much a game as it is an interactive mindfuck. Following four very distinct characters, from an FBI agent to an architect, *Heavy Rain* operates on the notion that we all see the same thing in very different ways and that when normal people are placed in extraordinary circumstances, perception and morality can go right out the window. With no real wrong way to play and thus, no way to really fail, *Heavy Rain* ultimately relies on the choices you make throughout to tell the character's stories, all of which revolve around a murderer known as the Origami Killer. Uniquely, no matter what you do in *Heavy Rain*, the world will persist. If one of your characters somehow dies, for instance, you then move onto the next story with the choices you made previously affecting that person's experience. With perhaps the most interesting approach to mature themes to date, *Heavy Rain* is a landmark title that will certainly leave its mark on all who experience it. *RR*

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?



### Analog Experience Series

MSRP: \$349 (The Factory); arturia.com

For those of you still dedicated to the sounds of classic analog synths, but might be happier with something a little more up-to-date, Arturia's new line of hardware synthesizers could be exactly what you want. The Analog Experience Series comes in three different options, The Player, The Factory, and The Laboratory, all with different features. While The Laboratory stands as every musician's wet dream, complete with 49 keys, 3,500 sounds, and every controllable nuance available, The Player (25 keys) and The Factory (32 keys) are certainly the most practical. Regardless of the size you prefer, all three come with Arturia's Classic Synths presets (featuring the Moog Modular V, CS-80V, Prophet VS, and more) and the built-in Analog Factory virtual instrument software. *PF*

RED HOT



With hopes of erasing the failed promise of the original, *Red Steel 2* (Ubisoft, Wii) literally comes swinging out of the gate as the recent WiiMotion Plus peripheral sees one of its first real tests. The attachment, meant to make your wild Wii-mote swings feel even more realistic by decreasing the lag between your actions and what happens on-screen, works perfectly in *RS2* as your Man-With-No-Name hero hunts down a gang of power-hungry thugs who nearly killed off his clan with katana in hand and guns blazing. Somewhat of a futuristic samurai western, *RS2* delivers an unrivaled experience that is both sophisticated and outright fun for those Wii owners looking for more than Mario and mini-games. *RR*

READY FOR PRIME TIME



### Korg Kaossilator Pro

MSRP: \$460; korg.com

Korg's invention of the Kaoss line of products over a decade ago changed the effects game for musicians and producers both in the studio and on stage. Through the years, Korg continued to innovate such institutions as the DJ mixer and video/audio samplers; now Korg introduces its first touchpad-based synthesizer, Kaossilator Pro. The synth's soundbank contains sounds suitable for genres ranging from electro to hip-hop to reggae and house, with plenty of acoustic instruments available as well. Using the high-quality samples along with a built-in arpeggiator, octave and key control, Kaoss' trusty touchpad proves to be as simple and innovative as Korg has ever been. *PF*

NO LAUGHING MATTER



Based, albeit very loosely, on the 14th Century poem, *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, *Dante's Inferno* (EA; PS3, Xbox 360) sees a grizzled veteran of the Third Crusade chasing his ladylove through the Nine Circles of Hell after Lucifer himself steals her soul. The ultimate cock-block! With huge environments soaked in the twisted imagery of the classic tale, Dante battles against the agents of Greed, Lust, and Anger with the Grim Reaper's own scythe. Throughout, you can either choose to punish or absolve the souls of the damned that you come across, and ultimately must face the sins of your own past in hopes of achieving ultimate redemption. *RR*

WOAH, BIG DADDY



The sequel to one of 2007's most innovative shooters, *Bioshock 2* (2K; Xbox 360, PS3) places you in the moist, heavy boots of the original's intimidating nemesis, the Big Daddy, as you awaken in the undersea utopia called Rapture, 10 years later, in search of your diminutive, energy-sucking muse, the Little Sister. Unfortunately, time has not been kind to Rapture as, at the behest of the city's new cult-like leader, the number of bloodthirsty mutants who roam the art-deco halls has increased, in addition to an even more diabolically threatening presence than yourself, the nimble and deadly Big Sister. With online multiplayer and even more weapons and bio-engineered powers like drills, tornadoes, and invisibility available to your meaty paws, *Bioshock 2* raises the intensity of the original in almost every way. *RR*

## GOD OF WAR III

(SONY, PS3)



*God of War III* follows the angry undead Spartan, Kratos, betrayed by the Gods of Mt. Olympus, as he leads his final assault on Zeus' domain with the aid of the furious, though potentially duplicitous, titans. With the power of the PS3, the series finally realizes its full potential as the visuals, while always magnificent, are now much more fluid, realistic, and grand in scale, with at times over 50 enemies on screen and set pieces that are both lofty in scope and detail. Gameplay is faster, bloodier, and more intuitive than ever, as Kratos mercilessly punishes the unholy creatures set against him. While the visceral, gory combat the series is known for remains intact—rip out a cyclops' eye! Gut a centaur! Remove the jaw of a water-horse-crab-thingy!—new weapons, such as the brutish Cestus, gauntlets that can bust through stone, make taking out foes all the more satisfying. However, the meat of combat lies rooted in the lightning-fast combos you are able to whip out with your go-to tools of evisceration, the chained Blades of Athena. Other items, such as Icarus' Wings, the Golden Fleece, and the head of Helios himself, are also available to you in your campaign against this godly treachery. Epic in all senses of the word with its sweeping, cinematic visuals, non-stop action, and unmatched brutality, *God of War III* has clawed its way to the top of every gamer's must-have list. *RR*

VIS-ED

## Aaron Huey

FROM AFGHANI DRUG RAIDS TO OKLAHOMA FRAT HOUSES, THIS IS ONE PHOTOGRAPHER WHO AIN'T NEVER SCARED.

[Left: Female student in Sana'a, Yemen, 2009](#)

"It's not how many, it's how deep," states Aaron Huey. Get your mind out of the gutter—I've just asked him how many countries he's visited. It's a question he doesn't like to answer because it makes him "sound like a backpacker in Thailand"—though Huey's resume would strike fear and awe into the heart of even the most intrepid Kiwi hosteller.

In his 33 years on the planet, this renowned documentary photographer has walked across America and hitchhiked across Siberia, found beauty in the poorest areas of the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Georgia, with Sufi mystics, and run from potential kidnappers in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and other mysterious and war-torn areas of the world.

Growing up in a small farming town in Wyoming, Huey always had an artistic bent, taking off for Slovakia at the age of 18 to study stone sculpting. He found himself bitten by the travel bug and, despite a degree in painting and printmaking, turning increasingly towards the storytelling powers of the camera lens. It's served him well—he has photographed for *National Geographic*, *The New Yorker*, *Smithsonian*, *Harper's*, and *The New York Times*, built an artist-in-residence program in New Mexico, and been nominated for numerous prizes along the way.

Although currently based in Seattle, Washington (with his wife, Kristin, his son, Hawkeye, and their dog, Suki), Huey might be anywhere in a given week, including shuttling between two ongoing projects: shooting large-format photos of Salvation Mountain in the desert outside of Palm Springs, California and documenting a Native American reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. We caught him on a rare occasion—editing photos while listening to The Glitch Mob and Blockhead—and asked him to tell us some stories.

[aaronhuey.com](#)



**Where did you grow up and what did your parents do for a living?**

I grew up in a town of 5,000 in Wyoming. I lived with my stepfather, an accountant at a Pepsi-Cola plant, and my mother, an elementary-school secretary. My birth father was in theater and runs a small program at a college in the panhandle of Texas.

**What job did you want when you were 15?**

I wanted to be a painter, somewhere between Abstract Expressionism and Pop.

**What artists influenced you when you were younger?**

All propaganda art. Gilbert and George, Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, Tyler Hicks, William Albert Allard.

**What is the craziest place in the world you've been?**

It's always about both the place and the timing, never just the geographic location. I'd say the

Taliban schools in Chaman, on the Pakistani/Afghan border (pre-Sept 11, 2001); street protests in Shiraz, Iran on the 20th anniversary of the hostage crisis; a temple site called Kekku in Eastern Burma (only five other outsiders had seen it at that point, back in 1998); dance parties in Kabul, Afghanistan and poppy fields in the South; the mountains of Svanetia in the Georgian Republic; and the old city of Sana'a, Yemen.

**What percent of your travels are on assignment?**

It's 50/50. Everything I've ever done on my own, I've later sold. If I believe in it, I can always get it published in some form.

**Give us one travel tip.**

Travel alone and go someplace that scares you. It doesn't have to be a war zone—it can be even be your hometown—but just go a bit deeper than you are comfortable with.

**What has been the most heartbreaking thing you've seen while photographing?**

My entire four years documenting several families on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota. I've never seen such darkness. I've never seen a war that won't end.

**What is the greatest length to which you've gone to get a particular photo?**

On the Pine Ridge reservation, I slept on the floors of gangster kids' homes while they drank and fought all night, endured death threats, and generally put myself in a position no outsider has been willing to, and I kept coming back. That long-term commitment has led to amazing access and amazing images. On assignment for *The New Yorker* in Afghanistan, I went on the first attempt at drug eradication in the Oruzgan province and was nearly killed in a four-and-a-half-hour running gun battle/ambush, separated from the American mercenaries with no armored vehicle, running through enemy villages with a Taliban prisoner. (I have pics.)



**Opposite:**  
Flying kites in a graveyard  
on the edge of Kabul, 2007

**Above left:**  
Sufi shrine,  
Pakistan, 2006

**Above top:**  
The grave of Staff Sgt.  
Timothy P. Davis, age 28

**Above right:**  
Carbon Canyon,  
Los Angeles fires, 2008







#### What do you feel is the best way to make your subjects feel comfortable?

I either go way deep and spend a lot of time with them or just hang out until people get bored with having photos taken or forget I'm around, because that's when I get the shot—when they aren't thinking about me. Sometimes that means being a part of their life for a while before you get out the camera.

#### Any advice for young photographers?

Be willing to take on huge debt to make your art. Make your work deeper and better than those before you and eventually someone will notice. If you don't think the work is better than what you've seen, then go back until it is. If you don't have credit cards, then figure out how to do commercial work for the mega-corporations. There is no money in photojournalism. It's a desperate way to make a living. The day rate for editorial photographers is stuck in 1982.

#### What is your dream assignment?

Anything that pays me \$40,000 or more (my total credit card debt)! I'm already doing my dream assignments, I'm just not getting my dream paychecks.

#### Who is your dream artist to photograph?

Neko Case, and any band that wears costumes.

#### What is the luckiest photo you've ever taken?

My image in Pakistan of a man kneeling at a grave near the Sufi shrine of Uch Sharif.

#### Do you feel like you have a particular style to your photographs?

I don't use any tricks. A lot of shooters winning awards these days are doing crazy Photoshop alterations of color, or hardcore vignetting around the edges with Photoshop filters. I'm not sure how

to describe my style. A lot of my work is dark and looks a bit sad, which is strange because I'm such a smiley, over-the-top positive guy who wears gold shoes most days. My "walk across America" portraits make people look a bit introspective, and because of that they look a bit sad. I guess I like that moment when people go inside themselves and are unaware of me.

#### What was the catalyst for you deciding to walk across America?

I wanted to do something impossible, something without end, so I could focus on the present. The walk stayed that way until Indiana. When I could see the end, I lost interest (but I still finished walking).

#### How long did it take you to cross America, and what are some of your most indelible memories of the trip?

It took 154 days, walking anywhere from 15 to 46 miles per day; a total of 3,349 miles. Some memories include: running out of water in the middle of the Bradshaw Trail (a 100-mile dirt road in the Mojave Desert); running up Salt River Canyon; my visit with a transvestite named Oweena; all-night walks in the central states playing my Hot Lixxx Solid Gold Rock Star toy guitar; a frat house in Norman, Oklahoma; the 46-mile day; Amish country; and Bloody Marys at Battery Park.

#### When you're away from home, what do you end up craving?

Diversity in food. If I'm in a place for a long time, I start to get tired of lamb and injera.

#### What are the most essential qualities of a documentary photographer? Can those be developed or are they innate?

Some things can be learned. A visual understanding of great composition and how to use a camera and expensive lenses can be learned, but drive and a real hunger for making photos and telling stories... I don't think that part can be learned. You either have that inside or you don't. I think a willingness to take risks is what makes a great shooter.

#### Where are you itching to go?

Back to Burma. Back to Iran. Back to Afghanistan. Syria. The Sudan. Would love to see North Korea.

#### What area of the world do you feel deserves more coverage right now?

Burma. No one cares because we have nothing to gain, but people are suffering terribly there.

#### What is the last thing you saw that really shocked you?

A Sufi *urs* [pilgrimage in remembrance of a saint's death] in remote Pakistan, and being on the run from a potential kidnapping threat on the same trip. Everything in Yemen. The tea fields at sunrise in Western Kenya.

#### What is your biggest vice?

Ego. Hey, I'm human.

*Opposite:*  
Taliban ambush in  
Druzgan province,  
Afghanistan, 2007

*Above:*  
Poppy eradication  
near Jalalabad,  
Afghanistan, 2007

# OUTBOX: ALEX GOPHER

As one of the founding fathers of the French touch scene in the '90s, Alex Gopher has seen his fair share of clubs, studios, and odd experiences. On the tail of releasing *My New Remixes* (Go 4 Music), the prolific producer, DJ, and Air collaborator took time out from working next door to Etienne de Crecy to tell us about stolen identities, live snafus, and why he fancies himself more of a ground squirrel. *Patric Fallon*

## **XLR8R: What are you listening to right now?**

Alex Gopher: Etienne de Crecy doing a new track. We have just one door between our studios, and this door is often open. It gives us the opportunity to help each other and share advice.

## **What band did you want to be in as a teenager?**

Bass player of Joy Division, and so New Order...

## **What's the weirdest story you've ever heard about yourself?**

Ten years ago: "Last weekend Alex Gopher played in New York City." I was in Paris. Somebody played as a DJ under my name. He should have called me, we could have figured out a good deal together!

## **Favorite city to play in?**

These days it's Paris, at Social Club.

## **Name one piece of gear you couldn't live without.**

My cellphone.

## **Worst experience at a live show?**

It was in Belgium. I was supposed to play live in a club with my band for my 2007 album, which was more rock influenced. People were waiting for commercial dance music and were really disappointed, then half of my equipment broke down... I stopped the concert and ran to the DJ booth to play records. Big, big shame.

## **Worst experience recording in the studio?**

For my first album, we were recording voices with Michael Payne, who was singing on a track. He wanted to erase the tape because he was disagreeing with my manager over contracts during a break in the recording. It was horrible for me, as my manager was very [difficult] and I actually thought Michael was right! I was so happy with the track. I was very depressed, as it was horrible to think that a contract issue might prevent it from being made. But gladly, after a long discussion, they found an agreement, and we kept the track.



## **Of the two types of gophers in the world (pocket gophers and ground squirrels), which do you most identify with?**

If we talk about physical appearance, the ground squirrel! I'm tall and slim more than small and round.

## **What were Air like as kids?**

Exactly like now, without the money. They kept their hair, I did not...

## **What other artist would you most like to collaborate with?**

Marvin Gaye, John Lennon, Curtis Mayfield, Jimmy Hendrix, Serge Gainsbourg, Ian Curtis. More simply, Soulwax.

## **If you had to listen to one song on repeat for the rest of your life, what would it be?**

"Things Behind The Sun" by Nick Drake.

## **If you had to use one word to describe your tunes, what would it be?**

Versatile, even if I should say solid.

## **So you're about to start on a remix: What's your morning routine that day?**

Waking up, [eating] breakfast, taking my two sons to school, checking new emails, riding my Vespa, and going to the studio. Erasing everything that I don't like in the original track in my Pro Tools. Switching on my MPC1000, my Future Retro Mobius sequencer, and my Korg MS-20, [then] having fun.

## **Of all the tracks on your upcoming remix compilation, which is your favorite?**

Shinichi Osawa's "Push." I have played it in all my sets for two years and always with the same pleasure.

## **If you could've spent your life doing anything outside of music, what would it have been?**

Photos. I would like to have a second life for that.

[go4music.fr](http://go4music.fr)

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